

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

BILTMORE ESTATE

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Biltmore Estate (Additional Documentation and Boundary Reduction)

Other Name/Site Number: N/A

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Generally bounded by the Swannanoa River on the north, the paths of NC 191 and I-26 on the west, the paths of the I-25 and the Blue Ridge Parkway on the south, and a shared border with numerous property owners on the east; One Biltmore Plaza. Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Asheville Vicinity: X

State: NC County: Buncombe Code: 021 Zip Code: 28801

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property
Private: X
Public-Local:
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

Category of Property
Building(s):
District: X
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing
56 buildings
31 sites
51 structures
0 objects
138 Total

Noncontributing
57 buildings
25 sites
30 structures
0 objects
112 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: All

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

Designated a NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK on

May 23, 1963

by the Secretary of the Interior

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**4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- \_\_\_ Entered in the National Register
- \_\_\_ Determined eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_ Determined not eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_ Removed from the National Register
- \_\_\_ Other (explain):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**Historic:Category.

DOMESTIC  
 DOMESTIC  
 COMMERCE/TRADE  
 RECREATION AND CULTURE  
 RECREATION AND CULTURE  
 AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE  
 AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE  
 AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE  
 AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE  
 AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE  
 AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE  
 AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE  
 AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE  
 AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE  
 INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION  
 LANDSCAPE  
 LANDSCAPE  
 LANDSCAPE

Subcategory:

Single dwelling  
 Secondary structure  
 Office building  
 Museum  
 Work of art  
 Processing  
 Storage  
 Agricultural  
 Animal facility  
 Fishing facility/site  
 Horticultural facility  
 Agricultural outbuilding  
 Irrigation facility  
 Waterworks  
 Garden  
 Forest  
 Natural feature

Current:Category

DOMESTIC  
 DOMESTIC  
 DOMESTIC  
 COMMERCE/TRADE  
 COMMERCE/TRADE  
 COMMERCE TRADE  
 COMMERCE/TRADE  
 RECREATION AND CULTURE  
 RECREATION AND CULTURE  
 AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE  
 AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE  
 AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE  
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 AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE  
 AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE  
 INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION  
 LANDSCAPE  
 LANDSCAPE  
 LANDSCAPE  
 LANDSCAPE

Subcategory

Single dwelling  
 Secondary structure  
 Hotel  
 Office building  
 Department store  
 Restaurant  
 Warehouse  
 Museum  
 Work of art  
 Processing  
 Storage  
 Agricultural  
 Animal facility  
 Horticultural facility  
 Agricultural outbuilding  
 Irrigation facility  
 Waterworks  
 Parking lot  
 Garden  
 Forest  
 Natural feature

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

## Architectural Classification:

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals  
French Renaissance  
Colonial Revival  
Late Victorian  
Shingle Style  
Other: Manorial Style  
Mixed  
No style

## Materials:

Foundation: Brick  
Stone

Walls: Wood/weatherboard  
Wood/shingle  
Brick  
Stone  
Stone/granite  
Stone/limestone  
Stucco  
Concrete

Roof: Wood/wood shingles  
Metal  
Terra Cotta  
Asphalt  
Concrete  
Synthetics  
Stone/slate

Other: Wood  
Brick  
Stone  
Metal/cast iron  
Metal/copper  
Terra cotta

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### Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

#### INTRODUCTION

Biltmore Estate is the residual holding that comprises the core home estate of the vast Gilded Age establishment created by George Washington Vanderbilt between 1888 and ca. 1902 and held by his grandson and two of his great-grandchildren to the present. The acreage within the revised National Historic Landmark boundary includes 3,758 acres held by The Biltmore Company (William A.V. Cecil) in two tracts flanking the path of Interstate 40, which crosses the north edge of the estate, together with the 124.48 acres comprising its path and rights of way, and 3,067 acres on the west side of the French Broad River held by West Range, LLC (William A.V. Cecil Jr. and Diana Cecil Pickering). The total acreage is 6,949.48 acres. The estate is located in southwest Asheville and lies astride the S-shaped course of the French Broad River, which flows to the north and is joined by the Swannanoa River at the northernmost point on the estate. The present boundary of the estate was created in 1979 when George Henry Vanderbilt Cecil and William Amherst Vanderbilt Cecil, the two grandsons of George Washington Vanderbilt, divided the ancestral estate. This division occurred sixteen years after the estate was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1963. By choice William Amherst Vanderbilt Cecil retained the core 6,825-acre tract; his brother George received the remainder of the adjoining estate lands, comprising some 5,000 acres of fields and woodlands, principally on the south side of the estate. In 1993 The Biltmore Company conveyed the estate's west side lands of 3,067 acres to Mr. Cecil Jr. and his sister Mrs. Pickering. Except for a small 1920s log cottage erected for an estate employee and some minor traces of the path of the arboretum road, a project which failed and was abandoned by the turn of the twentieth century, all of the significant built historic resources, forest plantations, and landscape features associated with Biltmore Estate during its period of significance, 1888 to 1950, are located on this holding. A comparison of the "Guide Map of Biltmore Estate," prepared in 1896 by Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot, with the map of the estate prepared for this study, indicates the very real extent to which this residual holding reflects the home estate as it existed in 1896. After the guide map was prepared Mr. Vanderbilt acquired additional lands on the west side of his holding, which are included herein, and other real estate on the east side of the estate, as well as other adjoining and outlying tracts.

Biltmore Estate, today, is bounded by a series of natural and man-made property lines, and comprises two physically separate tracts. The smallest of these is the Biltmore Village lot on which the Estate Office (#2) stands. Sold in 1924 with the surrounding village, it was re-acquired in 1977. The principal tract comprising the residual acreage of Biltmore Estate is bounded on the north by a property line in the middle of the French Broad and Swannanoa rivers, on the east by the common boundary between Biltmore Forest and Biltmore Estate, on the south by the path of the Blue Ridge Parkway, on the southwest by the path of Interstate 26, on the west by the path of NC 191 (Brevard Road), and on the northwest by the property line between the estate and the acreage conveyed to the State of North Carolina for the Western North Carolina Farmers' Market, another property owner, and a line carrying in the middle of the French Broad River.

The gently rolling acreage of the estate, with splendid views through and into the surrounding mountainous landscape is bisected by the S-shaped course of the French Broad River. Approximately 3,758 acres lie on the east side of the French Broad River, and about half of this acreage comprises the portion of Biltmore Estate's grounds, gardens, roadways, fields, and woodlands open to view to paying guests. The 3,067 acres on the west side of the French Broad River is entirely private. Beginning with Mr. Vanderbilt's ownership and into the 1980s, estate-operated ferries linked the two sides of the estate; however, with the end of dairying on the property the ferry ceased operation. The west side is served by two entrances off Brevard Road. About two-thirds (4,449 acres) of the residual estate is covered by woodland (including both forest plantations and natural

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woodlands) and is under an active forest management program. Approximately 700 acres is fenced and maintained as pasture for Angus beef cattle and sheep. Fields lying mostly in the bottom lands along the French Broad and Swannanoa rivers, totaling about 250 acres, are leased to an area farmer and planted in corn or other field crops. An undetermined acreage is occupied by the fourteen miles of paved roads and some thirty miles of maintained gravel roads that form the estate road system (#6) and the Approach Road (#11). The remaining acreage comprises the site, settings, gardens, and grounds of Biltmore House and the buildings and structures forming its architectural fabric and housing the commercial, agricultural, and domestic functions of the estate.

Biltmore Estate is made up of 250 buildings, structures, and sites, of which 138 are contributing resources and 112 are noncontributing. Except for a very few instances, including the Busbee Road Gate House (#19-19a) from ca. 1923, the contributing resources all date to either Mr. Vanderbilt's ownership and occupation of Biltmore Estate, from 1888 to 1914, or to the building up of the Biltmore Dairy operation which began in earnest ca. 1932 and was largely completed in 1950. The fifty-six contributing buildings, including the Estate Office (#2), Biltmore House (#22), the Horse Barn and Stable (#28), the Incubator House (#84), the Truck Farm Building (#93), the Sheep Barn (#97), and Shepherd's Cottage (#98), among others, were mostly erected during Mr. Vanderbilt's life or in the 1930s and 1940s. Except for the sheep barn and shepherd's cottage which are wood frame and sheathed with shingles, the buildings erected during Mr. Vanderbilt's day are mostly masonry, sheathed with limestone or finished in the estate vocabulary of rough coat with brick dressings, ornamental eaves, and red tile roofs. This vocabulary, except for the red tile roof, was repeated on the ca. 1934 farm garage (#75).

The mostly frame agricultural buildings (#36-38, 59-60, 68, 77, 102, 107, 112, 120, 122, 129, and 131) erected under Mr. Adams's supervision, and altogether typical of the period, are covered with gable or gambrel roofs and sheathed with weatherboards, German siding, or wood shingles. They are mostly painted white whereas the contemporary cottages and houses (#61-65, 71-72, 85-86, 109-110, and 117) erected for estate employees are painted either white or brown with white trim.

The fifty-seven noncontributing buildings are mostly not intrusive and can be divided into two general groups. The first is a series of amenity and tourism-related facilities, including the former ticket sales office (#4), reception/ticket center (#9), admission booth (#10), the Bistro restaurant (#79), and restroom buildings (#27 and 80), which are mostly recent well-made buildings whose appearance, materials, and detailing repeat the estate's turn-of-the-century vocabulary. The largest group comprise service buildings erected for the horticultural, agricultural, vineyard, commercial, and maintenance operations of the estate (#16-18, 29-30, 34, 43-51, 67, 76, among others), and mostly located beyond public view, or among a group of service buildings on the private west side of the estate (#99, 103-104, 108b, 118-119, 123, 134-135). Among the remaining buildings, largely classified as noncontributing for reason of date, is the handsomely finished East Side Ranger's House and its garage (#53-54). The most noticeable noncontributing building is the Inn on Biltmore Estate (#88), a seven-story 213-room hotel, which opened in spring 2001.

The fabric of the estate includes fifty-one contributing and thirty noncontributing structures. Twenty-eight of the contributing structures are stone or brick bridges (#6a-6q, 6s, 6ii, 6kk, 6nn, 11a-11g), all of which were built during Mr. Vanderbilt's ownership. A cast iron and concrete bridge (#95) spans the Swannanoa River and marks the location of the long-abandoned Asheville entrance to the estate. The other twenty-two contributing structures include the estate road system (#6), Ramp Douce (#23), the Vista Pergola (#24), the Lone Pine Reservoir (#20), all erected in the creation of the estate, and a group of structures, seven of which are silos at outlying farms (#69, 108-108a, 114-114a, 132-132a), built during the interwar period expansion of the dairying operations. Twenty of the thirty noncontributing structures are concrete bridges or revetments on farm and service roads, most of which are near grade, built in the second half of the twentieth century, and in no way

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intrusive. The only intrusive structure of the remaining ten is the path of Interstate 40 (#12), two of whose three elevated sections are sheathed with stone veneer to diminish their visual impact.

The thirty-one contributing sites on Biltmore Estate include Biltmore Estate (#1), gardens, grounds and landscape features (#25e-26, 32a-b, 96), the forest plantations (#137a-137t) that comprise an important part of the estate's woodland cover, and the sites of important farm operations (#35, 55, 100, 111, and 130). The twenty-five noncontributing sites are nonintrusive. Two archaeological sites mark the visible ruins of River Cliff Cottage (#42), a house designed by the Hunt office and often used by Frederick Law Olmsted on his visits to the estate, and the below grade foundation remains of the Brick Farm House (#151), a substantial existing farm seat that was remodeled and used by Mr. Vanderbilt, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Olmsted, and other distinguished visitors to the estate while the mansion was under construction. The group includes fourteen archaeological sites (#138-150, 152) predating the period of significance, and three incidental sites (#41, 121, 125). Five of these noncontributing resources are the three paved parking lots (#600-6qq) off the Approach Road and two much smaller gravel-covered parking lots (#6rr-6ss) off Shiloh Road. The 74.3-acre vineyard and lake (#133) in Long Valley, associated with the estate's winery, are essentially agricultural features which meld with the larger agrarian landscape of the west side of Biltmore Estate.

The Inventory List, beginning with entries for the estate (#1) and the estate office (#2) and excepting the forest plantations (#137a-t) and archaeological sites (#138-152) at its end, is generally arranged in the sequence of their geographical location. The roster begins with the resources first seen by the visitor and continues in that fashion along the Approach Road to the mansion and its gardens. Along that route, properties not accessible to the public are included in their appropriate location. This arrangement continues along the course of Glen Road, River Road, Pony Road, Ferry Road, Dairy Road, Wendover Road, and lastly along Swannanoa Road by which visitors leave the grounds open to view. The Estate Road System (#6) and the bridges along its course (#6a-6nn) are individual entries. Olmsted's great Approach Road (#11) and its bridges (#11a-g) are set apart as separate resources because of their especial significance in the landscape history of the estate. The resources on the west side of the estate (#97-136), west of the French Broad River and not accessible to the public, are likewise arranged geographically beginning with the sheep farm buildings on the south and continuing along the farm roads to the vineyard operations to the north.

The residual grounds of Biltmore Estate, comprising 6,825 acres held by The Biltmore Company and West Range, LLC and approximately 124.48 acres occupied by the path of Interstate 40, retain a remarkably high degree of integrity. This accomplishment is all the more significant given the history of the estate in the twentieth century. For a period of some seventy-three years, from 1930 to 2003, the estate has been open to visitors and facilities have been necessarily provided for their comfort. New buildings have been designed largely in a manner and with materials sympathetic to the historic buildings. In two instances, at the mansion stables and the Mule/Calf Barn (#56), existing buildings have been adapted for food service. Gift shops have been located in the former carriage house and in the utilitarian areas under the Conservatory (#26b). The scale of these facilities, as well as restroom buildings, is generally unobtrusive. The size of two other facilities, the automobile and bus parking lots (#600-6ss), and the Inn on Biltmore Estate (#88), necessitated by their function, mark them as intrusions in the landscape of the estate. The paved asphalt automobile and bus parking lots are located on the north and south sides of the Approach Road as it nears the Esplanade. Dense shrub and tree plantings are used to mitigate their necessary presence. By its nature, the decision to erect a hotel for the overnight accommodation of visitors to the estate was destined to produce a substantial building, necessary for both financial feasibility and income production. Although efforts were consciously made to mitigate the effects of its size and presence, through massing and materials, a modern neo-traditional building whose square footage is just under that of the mansion and its stable block, is by definition intrusive. However, it does not compromise the significance and overall integrity of Biltmore Estate.

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Two other groups of buildings, commercial and service facilities, and agricultural buildings, merit discussion. The estate's principal group of commercial and service-related buildings (#44-52), erected between 1965 and 1996, stand in convenient isolation in a woodland adjoining the Service Road. Smaller groups of less substantial noncontributing buildings and structures exist in association with the horticultural operations south of The Conservatory (#29-31) and at Long Valley Farm (#124-124c).

The agricultural history of Biltmore Estate is reflected in a wide range of buildings, structures, and facilities dating from 1890 into the 1960s. By far, the great majority of these resources were associated with the dairy operations on the estate initiated by Mr. Vanderbilt in 1896 and terminated by his grandson in the mid 1980s. Likewise the majority of resources in this important subgroup of agricultural buildings date from the important buildup of the dairy operations on the estate in the second quarter of the twentieth century, and particularly after the organization of The Biltmore Company in 1932. Beginning in the 1960s changes in milking operations, which came to be consolidated at Alta Vista Farm, rendered a number of facilities obsolete. The cessation of dairying on the estate in 1985 robbed a much larger group of their use and presumed value. Since 1985, many of the former dairy buildings have found new usage for other agricultural operations, for storage, and in the case of French Broad Farm (#35-40) as the stables of the Biltmore Estate Equestrian Center. A number of buildings have been lost, the most important of which were the calf and maternity barns at the (former) Calf and Test Barn Complex (#55), and the sense of place that once defined Long Valley Farm (#121). Nevertheless, the survival and preservation of so many of these buildings continues to reflect the paramount status of the dairying operation here and its central role in the life of the country estate for nearly nine decades.

The property being removed from the boundary of the Biltmore Estate and Biltmore Forestry School Site National Historic Landmark comprises all that part of the former estate lands that lie south and southwest of Interstate 26 and south and southeast of the Blue Ridge Parkway, together with smaller parcels on the east and west sides of the residual estate that have been alienated from the estate through development, sale to outside parties, and a series of new non-historic uses. Except for the sale of a tract in the northwest corner of the estate for the location of the Western North Carolina Farmers Market in 1975, prior to the division of the estate in 1979, the changes in the character of these lands came after 1979 when they were conveyed to Biltmore Dairy Farms, Inc., now Biltmore Farms, Inc. A map submitted with this documentation, prepared in 2002 and updated in 2003, shows both the boundaries of the holdings assigned to The Biltmore Company and Biltmore Dairy Farms, Inc. and the development that has occurred to date on these lands that altogether compromises their significance and historical associations with the estate and its areas and period of significance. The remaining acreage that has not been developed as yet has been cut over in a sequence of cuttings that has removed the merchantable timber except for a tract on the north face of Ducker Mountain and the wedge-shaped tract bounded by the French Broad River on the south, the path of the Blue Ridge Parkway on the north, and the power transmission line right of way on the west. The trees in this last-named area have been marked during 2003 for a future cutting. The acreage north of Ducker Mountain is slated for eventual development as a residential community. While the map indicates a woodland cover on this property, not altogether different to the untrained eye to the woodlands on the residual estate, ground inspection and documentation indicate that short-term forestry practices govern the management of this property in advance of its eventual, planned development, whereas both the historic plantations and native woodlands on the residual estate are managed according to a long-term scientific plan for both the health of the forest and the production of valuable timber.

1. Biltmore Estate  
1888-1950  
Contributing site



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Biltmore Estate, comprising 6,949.48 acres, represents the residual core property that was the focus of an extraordinary collaboration by George Washington Vanderbilt, Frederick Law Olmsted, and Richard Morris Hunt in the years between 1888 and 1895. During this period, Mr. Vanderbilt acquired dozens of parcels, of varying acreages and conditions, and quickly assembled a principal holding of several thousand contiguous acres that swelled to about 8,644 acres by 1896 when Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot prepared the "Guide Map of Biltmore Estate." Early in this process, in the late summer or early autumn of 1888, when the site of the proposed winter residence had been purchased and some preliminary view of the extent of the estate was established, Frederick Law Olmsted came to Asheville, viewed the lands, and commissioned a survey of the property from J.G. Astor. This visit and the resultant survey formed the basis of his report to Mr. Vanderbilt, conveyed by letter on 12 July 1889 that guided the overall creation and development of the estate's extensive grounds. Olmsted's proposal and sustained work at Biltmore into mid 1895 resulted in the creation of a large multi-thousand-acre estate comprised of new roadways, pleasure grounds and gardens, a series of agricultural fields and farms, together with woodlands made up of both forest plantations and volunteer growth. Vestiges of old usages and the misuse of these lands, roadways and paths, as well as buildings of varying quality and condition, were removed and their scars erased from the land. In short Olmsted and his firm created the structural fabric of an estate landscape that was exceptional in its time and which has survived with a degree of integrity rare in properties of this extent, scale, and history. The stewardship of this property during Mr. Vanderbilt's life and in the years following have sustained and preserved an estate that Olmsted himself described in 1890 as "The first great private work of our profession in the country."

The worn landscape that Mr. Olmsted and his firm renewed, repaired, and replanted in the closing decade of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth century, became the site and setting for two sustained building programs that created the historic architectural fabric of the National Historic Landmark. The first of the pair was the initial, unprecedented building effort, undertaken by Mr. Vanderbilt in 1889 with Richard Morris Hunt as the principal architect, which produced the mansion and a series of supporting buildings, structures, and landscape features. It continued up to 1902. After a long period of almost no building in the 1910s and the addition of a few important buildings, including the Busbee Road Gate House in about 1923, a second major program was undertaken in the early 1930s that effectively rebuilt the dairy farm side of agricultural operations on the estate by 1950.

Today the lush landscape of Biltmore Estate bears eloquent testimony to the vision of Frederick Law Olmsted and his genius. Entering the estate through the entrance lodge and approaching the mansion by way of his extraordinary Approach Road, the visitor today, like guests in Mr. Vanderbilt's lifetime, encounters grounds that appear to be the work of nature but, instead, are the naturalistic work of the nation's greatest landscape architect. Woodlands, meadows, roadside verges, thick borders of rhododendron, kalmia, winter honeysuckle, and abelia, forest plantations, woodland clearings, fields, ageless rivers and man-made water features, gardens, pastures, and the grounds surrounding estate residences, farmyards, and guest facilities, all merge in a seemingly seamless fashion. The landscape of Biltmore Estate continues to evoke the qualities of the English parks and estates Frederick Law Olmsted admired and recounted in *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England* and his affection for the American scene and its capabilities that sustained him for as long as he could care.

## 2. Estate Office at One Biltmore Plaza

1893-1895

Contributing building.

As construction on the mansion and other buildings and features of the estate increased in the early 1890s, the need for a permanent estate office became pressing. Under cover of 30 January 1893, Richard Morris Hunt sent "a sketch of your office building--for suggestions" to Charles McNamee. A surviving first-floor plan, entitled

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“Sketch for Office Building,” is dated 1 April 1893 and bears the initials of draftsman “w.w.K.” It was refined in a later plan dated 19 June 1893. For reasons now unknown, the construction of the building was delayed until summer 1894. During this period (by 15 May 1894) the location of the office was changed from the northeast corner of present-day Hendersonville Road/Biltmore Avenue and Lodge Street, where it would have faced west to the Entrance Lodge, to a key location in the southwest corner of Lodge Street and the Plaza. Here it faces northeast onto the plaza, on the south side of the Biltmore Station, and was the first building seen by arriving guests. The one-and-a-half story masonry building, designed in the prescription Manorial Style adopted for estate buildings, stands on a mortared stone foundation, has symmetrical pebbledash elevations with half-timbering, brick window frames and other architectural embellishments, and a handsome bracketed cornice, all under an asphalt-shingle four-part hip roof. The building’s picturesque appearance is enhanced through the massing of the second story where the four corners of the building are reduced to a single story and the wide symmetrical center bays on each elevation have the appearance of wall dormers with half-timbered paneling. The single and paired windows on the first story have nine-over-one Queen Anne sash while the paired windows on the faces of the second-story elevations have diamond-shaped multi-pane sash above single panes. Granite steps on the façade lead up to an engaged porch supported by octagonal piers and the handsome entrance with a twelve-panel linen-fold door below a three-pane transom. The office building has a generally symmetrical plan with the stair/service hall in the center. Its original molded oak woodwork, wainscoting, and three panel doors remain, as does the bracketed brick mantel in the main office on the southeast side that was used by Mr. McNamee from 1895 until he departed the estate in 1904 and his successors afterward. The second story of the office was the headquarters of the Biltmore Forest School from its founding in 1898 into 1902. The building was sold in 1924 to the Town of Biltmore, later absorbed by the City of Asheville following the Depression. Under a lease arrangement, it continued to serve as the principal Estate office and was re-acquired by The Biltmore Company from the City of Asheville on October 18, 1977 and is currently being used as business offices for a portion of the Estate’s retail division.

- 3. Gatehouse Gift Shop  
1968  
Noncontributing building

Covered by a tall T-plan red-tile hip roof with paired dormers, this one-story, essentially rectangular building has pebbledash elevations with brick dressings. Designed by Baber & Wood, it remains one of the four main gift shops operated on the estate.

- 4. Ticket Sales Office (former)  
1962  
Noncontributing building

As visitation to the estate increased through the 1950s, when tickets were sold at the Entrance Lodge, plans were developed for a freestanding ticket office at the entrance to the estate. It was opened in 1962 and served as the principal ticket sales pavilion until 1994 when the present Reception/Ticket Center (#9) was placed in operation. The building was then refitted for the group sales office. The small rectangular one-story masonry building has brick dressed pebbledash elevations and a red tile hip roof punctuated by both wall and conventional dormers. They illuminate the central sales/reception area while the offices and restrooms are arranged around the perimeter of the building.

- 5. Entrance Lodge  
1895-1896  
Contributing building

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The design of the gate lodge was resolved in the months immediately preceding the death of Richard Morris Hunt on 31 July 1895. The first known (surviving) design for the entrance lodge, drafted by Warrington G. Lawrence and dated 12 May 1895, was for an eclectic French Romanesque-style lodge whose masonry elevation was continuous with the privacy walls stretching to the north and south. Paired minaret-like towers flanked the lodge proper, with a tall hip roof, positioned above an arch-headed entrance. That design was wisely rejected. The second known design, also drawn by Mr. Lawrence, has an English Renaissance flavor, and it became the genesis of the present building. It retained the center, arched passage in a rectangular building with brick-dressed pebbledash elevations and a hip roof with dormer windows set just above the cornice on each side. Drawings for the final design of the entrance lodge, stamped 27 June 1895, reflect important refinements of that scheme. The main block is raised in height for vertical emphasis, the hip roof is raised much higher and finished with simple metal finials, and the four symmetrical dormer windows are given real presence with tall gable or hip roofs and like metal finials.

The entrance lodge is a rectangular two-level masonry building with the keeper's lodgings contained in the dormer-illuminated third level. The tall, arched entrance is centered between brick dressed panels holding small windows at the first story; handsome partially gilded iron gates protect the opening. The side elevations have symmetrical, paired windows with bold stone lintels at each level while the rear elevation has single windows per story in each panel; they mostly hold one-over-one sash. The elevations are finished with a brick and wood cornice with inset copper guttering. The dormer windows have paired six-over-six sash, and all have hip roofs except for the front dormer, which has a tall gable roof fitted with a blind paneled transom and a lancet rake board. The chamber on the south (left) side of the tile-vaulted passage was the office of the gatekeeper and is now used by the on-duty security staff. The chamber on the north side serves as the entrance hall for the lodgings of the gatekeeper. A corner, enclosed stair rises to the mezzanine level with a bathroom and storage rooms and then up to the main attic level, which is partitioned, into two sizable rooms, a kitchen, and a closet. The woodwork, including the stair, door and window surrounds, and paneled doors, is consistent throughout the lodge and intact. These rooms are now used as offices by the estate security force.

6. Estate Road System  
1890-present  
Contributing structure

The estate road system, an important part of the design and organization of the estate created by Frederick Law Olmsted between 1889 and 1895, was put into effect in the same period by W.A. Thompson, the head of the estate engineering department, his successor, and workers under their supervision. Although Olmsted did not devote a chapter to roads in his 12 July 1889 memorandum to Mr. Vanderbilt, he was clearly cognizant of the requirement to replace the network of existing roads, lanes, and ways, with a comprehensive system of roads that would best serve the purposes of pleasure, agriculture, and forestry. The most important of these, the Approach Road (#11), was proposed in detail, received the attention of Mr. Olmsted through the period of his engagement at Biltmore, and came to be the "masterpiece" he anticipated, thus meriting its own entry in the inventory list. In his introduction to the Approach Road, Olmsted wrote "The present roads of the estate have been laid out as far as practicable on the ridge lands, where they could be made and kept passable at the least cost." The "Guide Map of Biltmore Estate," prepared in 1896 by Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot, indicates the extent to which Olmsted retained the good existing ridge roads and constructed others that accommodated the topography and served new purposes in the reorganized landscape, including the enjoyment of scenery throughout the home estate.

A comparison of the 1896 Guide Map with the estate map submitted with this report indicates the remarkable degree to which the road system devised by Olmsted remains intact and in use. The Approach Road, planned for

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the pleasure of Mr. Vanderbilt and his guests, and its companion service road, for the use of servants, staff, and suppliers, both continue to serve their original purpose as do Busbee, Glen, River, Ferry, and Wendover Roads and a number of lesser named and unnamed roads. The principal route for visitors to the estate today comprises an irregular circular path including the Approach, Glen, River, and Wendover Roads. This main route is bisected by a second access road for visitors that incorporates the old path of Ferry Road between River Road and Deerpark Restaurant and then connects with the Service Road to exit the estate. These roads are asphalt-paved and double-lane with no shoulders. The secondary tier of service roads, linking the above and providing access to all parts of the home estate on the east side of the French Broad River for domestic and agricultural purposes, are gravel-covered packed clay and narrower. The principal roads on the west side of the French Broad River, appearing on the 1896 map, are all unpaved and gravel coated, and they remain in use for agricultural purposes. Other like roads have been constructed on the lands there, purchased since 1896. The principal access to these western estate lands, including the vineyard, is through an unprepossessing main gate on Brevard Road (NC 191) and the lesser Jones gate. Although proposals to span the French Broad River and physically link the two parts of the estate were considered, ferries were used well into the mid-twentieth century; possibly the last of these is the one built by the Asheville Steel and Salvage Company and launched in 1947. The principal access to the home estate remains the Biltmore Village entrance; however, the unused bridge (#95) across the Swannanoa River at the Swannanoa Gate remains in place and the Busbee Road Gate House (#19) stands at the Busbee Gate that, since 1920, has linked the estate with Biltmore Forest. The only road appearing on the 1896 map that has lost prestige and presence is the Arboretum Road which carried off the Glen Road to the east. Its head, just north of the imposing brick bridge over the Bass Pond, is marked by a low stone wall. Altogether the estate has about fourteen miles of asphalt-paved roads and some thirty miles of regularly used and maintained gravel roads.

The estate road system includes paved, landscaped parking areas added between ca. 1975 and 2000 for the accommodation of visitors to the estate. These are located in five principal areas. After parking and purchasing tickets at the reception/ticket center (#9), visitors to the house and its immediate grounds park in one of two lots, A (#600) and B (#6pp), respectively, off the south and north sides of the Approach Road. A service road links lot B with lot C (#6qq) to the north, for bus and overflow parking, and two small ancillary lots (#6rr-6ss) further into the woodland to the north. Because of their size these lots appear as individual noncontributing sites. Paved parking lots for visitors to the winery (#78) are located on its southwest side, to the west towards the horse barn and stable (#81), and at the edge of the meadow to the southwest. Smaller paved parking lots are located at the Deerpark Restaurant (#56), at the Inn on Biltmore Estate (#88), and to the rear of the Conservatory (#26). Small informal gravel-covered parking areas for estate employees and staff are located off the north side of the Biltmore House (#22) and at the complex of horticultural service buildings (#28-31) south of the Conservatory.

The estate road system includes forty bridges and culverts that carry its paved and unpaved pleasure, service, and farm roads across branches, creeks, and lesser water courses. These are in addition to seven on the Approach Road (#11a-11g) that are discussed in its entry (#11). Twenty of these are contributing structures, erected of stone or brick during the period between 1890 and ca. 1900 when the building of the estate was essentially completed. The five brick bridges (#6c-d, 6j-k, and 6q) were built in the early 1890s of brick manufactured by the estate brickworks and to designs known or believed to have been drawn by Richard Sharp Smith. The stone bridges follow the model of those on the Approach Road, carefully crafted of quarry-faced ashlar masonry at Mr. Olmsted's direction, with low ramped revetments and ends that are merged with the natural landscape through the artful placement of irregular-shaped stones partially inset into grade. The stone came from the estate quarry, Pearson's quarry in Buncombe County, or the quarry of Mr. Troy at Balfour in Henderson County. The twenty noncontributing bridges and culverts are nearly all of concrete and on service

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roads except for the well-built bridge with brick revetments (#6mm) carrying public traffic to the Deerpark Restaurant. Although classed as noncontributing because of their age, they are unobtrusive.

- 6a. Stone bridge  
1890-1895  
Contributing structure

This bridge is essentially in the form of a culvert with low revetments of dry laid stone.

- 6b. Stone bridge  
1890-1895  
Contributing structure

Its appearance is essentially the same as 6a.

- 6c. Brick Bridge  
1893  
Contributing structure

Designed by Richard Sharp Smith and built by the D.C. Weeks company, this bridge encloses the southeast end of The Ramble and carries the path of the road linking the Esplanade with the Walled Garden while its single-span arch on the lower level allows passage from The Ramble into the Spring Garden. See entry #25.

- 6d. Brick Bridge  
1893  
Contributing

Designed by Richard Sharp Smith and built by D.C. Weeks company, this handsome bridge has pedestrian overlooks inset in its side walls that are elegantly coped with a Tudor-arch profile. Its elliptical arch spans the stream feeding the Bass Pond. See entry #32.

- 6e. Stone Bridge  
1896  
Contributing structure

This well-crafted bridge, similar in appearance to those on the Approach Road, was erected in the late summer and fall of 1896.

- 6f. Stone Bridge  
ca. 1896-1900  
Contributing structure

In the form of a revetment, this bridge dates to the construction of the Lagoon and has vertical ends and a flat top.

- 6g. Stone Bridge  
ca. 1895-1900  
Contributing structure

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This bridge and #6h are of a lesser craftsmanship than the other stone bridges. They have the typical stones laid crossways on the revetments; however, the ends are elevated and do not merge into grade.

- 6h. Stone Bridge  
ca. 1895-1900  
Contributing structure

Its appearance is essentially the same as above (#6g).

- 6i. Stone Bridge  
ca. 1896-1900  
Contributing structure

Similar in appearance to bridge #6f, this bridge was constructed in conjunction with the creation of the Lagoon.

- 6j. Brick Bridge  
1890-1895  
Contributing structure

The largest and most imposing of the five brick bridges on the estate, this C-shaped bridge carries the Service Road across a branch feeding into the French Broad River. Its sides are buttressed and coped with arched-top coping brick while the tall, arched span is flanked by shorter arched openings giving into chambers on either side. Its design, probably by Mr. Smith and approved by Mr. Hunt, was executed by the D.C. Weeks company.

- 6k. Brick Bridge  
1890-1895  
Contributing structure

Contemporary with the above bridge, this smaller, lower, single-span bridge with tapering buttresses on either side of the arch also carries the Service Road.

- 6l. Crossway Stone Bridge  
ca. 1895  
Contributing structure

While following the established pattern for bridges, this stone bridge curves, in plan, to follow the terrain.

- 6m. Stone Bridge on Service Road  
ca. 1895-1896  
Contributing structure

This well-crafted, highly-finished bridge follows the pattern seen on the Approach Road.

- 6n. Stone Bridge  
ca. 1895-1896  
Contributing structure

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Essentially following the Approach Road formula, this bridge has a well-finished arched opening above the water channel, fitted with a keystone, and low sides, and finished with cross blocks of stone, which finish near grade.

- 6o. Stone Bridge  
ca. 1895-1896  
Contributing structure

Departing somewhat in appearance from the established formula, and probably erected by a differently-skilled stonemason, this bridge has a handsome lancet-arch opening above the water channel and a slightly angular ramping of its side walls.

- 6p. Stone Bridge  
ca. 1895-1896  
Contributing structure

Located a short distance east of the above bridge (#6o), this stone bridge, with a wide arch spanning the flow of Ram Branch to the Swannanoa River was completed in the summer of 1896.

- 6q. Brick Bridge  
ca. 1893  
Contributing structure

The smallest of the estate's five brick bridges on its pleasure and service roads, this bridge, erected of bricks produced by the estate brickworks and stamped "Biltmore," is one of only three known surviving architectural features on the west side of the estate to date to Mr. Vanderbilt's ownership. The arch above the water channel is made up of four recessed, concentric courses inset in the side walls that are finished with Tudor-arch coping brick.

- 6r. Concrete Bridge  
ca. 1950-1975  
Noncontributing structure

This bridge, with low, near-grade poured concrete revetments, is one in the series on the river-side farm road that span the several watercourses flowing into the French Broad River.

- 6s. Stone Bridge  
ca. 1895-1896  
Contributing structure

This well-crafted bridge is similar in appearance to those on the Approach Road.

- 6t. Culvert  
ca. 1950-1975  
Noncontributing structure

Similar to bridge #6u but with taller, nearly eighteen-inch sides above grade.

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- 6u. Concrete Bridge  
ca. 1950-1975  
Noncontributing structure

This concrete bridge, in the form of a culvert, has low, flat sides.

- 6v. Concrete Bridge  
ca. 1950-1975  
Noncontributing structure

Similar to bridge #6u.

- 6w. Concrete Bridge  
ca. 1950-1975  
Noncontributing structure.

Similar to bridge #6u.

- 6x. Concrete Bridge  
ca. 1975-1995  
Noncontributing structure

Similar to bridge #6u.

- 6y. Concrete Bridge  
ca. 1950-1975  
Noncontributing structure

Similar to bridge #6u but with taller, nearly eighteen-inch sides above grade.

- 6z. Concrete Bridge  
ca. 1950-1975  
Noncontributing structure

This bridge is essentially similar to bridge #6u except that it has a fifteen-inch tall metal pipe railing on the top of its sides.

- 6aa. Concrete Bridge  
ca. 1950-1975  
Noncontributing structure

This bridge is essentially similar to bridge #6u with a metal railing.

- 6bb. Concrete Bridge  
ca. 1950-1975  
Noncontributing structure

This bridge is similar to #6u.



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- 6cc. Concrete Bridge  
ca. 1950-1975  
Noncontributing structure

This bridge, spanning Four Mile Branch, is larger than most of the others but otherwise similar in appearance. Its sides are topped by a forty-inch tall pipe railing.

- 6dd. Culvert  
ca. 2000  
Noncontributing structure

This construction is essentially similar to #6t, and it, too, probably replaces an earlier concrete bridge.

- 6ee. Concrete Bridge  
ca. 1950-1975  
Noncontributing structure

This bridge is essentially similar to #6u.

- 6ff. Concrete Bridge  
ca. 1950-1975  
Noncontributing structure

This bridge is essentially similar to #6u.

- 6gg. Concrete Bridge  
ca. 1950-1975  
Noncontributing structure

This bridge is essentially similar to #6u.

- 6hh. Concrete Bridge  
ca. 1950-1975  
Noncontributing structure

This bridge is essentially similar to #6u, but with inset metal pipe railings.

- 6ii. Brick and Stone Bridge  
ca. 1895  
Contributing structure

This simple bridge with a brick arch and unfinished stone revetments was built to carry the proposed arboretum road. It was left unfinished with the collapse of the arboretum project.

- 6jj. Bridge  
ca. 1990-2000  
Noncontributing structure

This simple timber frame bridge, in a remote part of the estate, has a wood deck.

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- 6kk. Stone Bridge  
ca. 1890-1895  
Contributing structure

This well-crafted bridge repeats the appearance of the Approach Road bridges.

- 6ll. Concrete Culvert  
ca. 1970-1990  
Noncontributing structure

This construction comprises a prefabricated metal pipe culvert with poured concrete revetments.

- 6mm. Bridge  
ca. 1990  
Noncontributing structure

This bridge with angular brick revetments with cement coping and a pipe of precast concrete panels is the most well-built of the estate's modern bridges.

- 6nn. Stone and Brick Bridge  
ca. 1895; 2003  
Contributing structure

This stone bridge, similar in design and appearance to others on the estate and the Approach Road, existed in its original condition until 2003. During a project to modestly widen River Road to accommodate two-way traffic, the handsome stone coping was removed. While the appearance and significance of the bridge were compromised, the original brick structure carrying the stream under River Road remains entirely intact and preserves the contributing status of the bridge.

- 6oo. Parking Lot A  
1980-1985  
Noncontributing site

This asphalt-paved lot, with 374 spaces for vehicles, was built in sections between 1980 and 1985.

- 6pp. Parking Lot B  
1975-1985  
Noncontributing site

The oldest section of this asphalt-paved lot was built in 1975 and expanded in the following years to accommodate 368 vehicles.

- 6qq. Parking Lot C  
1993-1994  
Noncontributing site

Also asphalt-paved, this lot is used for both overflow and bus parking. It can accommodate 519 conventional vehicles or forty large coaches.

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- 6rr. Parking Lot D  
1996-2003  
Noncontributing site

The oldest section of this gravel-covered lot dates to 1996 and includes later expansion allowing for a total of ninety-five vehicles in spaces marked by curbs.

- 6ss. Parking Lot E  
ca. 1996-2003  
Noncontributing site

This gravel-covered lot provides overflow parking for 187 vehicles in spaces marked by curbs.

- 7. Eastcote  
1899-1900; ca. 1956  
Contributing building

The location of Eastcote, in the northeast corner of the estate, was determined by its proximity to the Biltmore Nursery whose operations were centered on the north bank of the Swannanoa River, west of the Entrance Lodge (#5) and northwest of this site. Designed by Richard Sharp Smith in the summer of 1899, the house was built as the residence of Chauncey Delos Beadle (1866-1950), who came to the estate at Olmsted's direction in April 1890 to oversee the estate's nursery operations. Beadle gained the unquestioned confidence of Olmsted, who sent his son and namesake to Biltmore in 1894 to study and work under him, and of Mr. Vanderbilt who entrusted the management of the estate to him after Mr. McNamee departed in 1904. Mr. Beadle held the position of superintendent until his retirement in 1945. He continued to live at Eastcote until his death on 4 July 1950. His tenure of sixty years on the estate and his occupation of this house from 1900 to his death remain unmatched at Biltmore. On 26 August 1899 Mr. Smith wrote Mr. McNamee informing him the "Contract drawings and specifications for Mr. Beadle's house and stable are being prepared and will be ready before Mr. Beadle returns." The contract for its construction was awarded to William T. Hadlow on 7 September. Mr. Hadlow, who had erected a number of buildings on the estate in the 1890s, was then engaged on the construction of houses in Biltmore Village. The house was completed in 1900 and occupied by Mr. Beadle and his wife, Margaretta A. Wetzel, who were married in 1891. After Beadle's death, the cottage was renovated and occupied by Everett D. Mitchell, the farm manager, until late 1955 or early 1956, when further renovations and expansions were made to Eastcote for its new residents. George Cecil and his family removed from Biltmore House to Eastcote in 1956 and lived here until shortly before the division of the estate in 1979. The house was next the home of Dick Bryson, the landscape/operations manager of the estate, from ca. 1978 to 1984. It remains the residence of an estate employee.

Eastcote is a substantial two-story pebble-dash clad house of traditional appearance. The original three-bay, center-hall, double-pile main block is covered with a bell-cast hip roof of asphalt shingles. Single and paired windows contain six-over-one sash. The expansive L-shaped porch, sheltering the center entrance and wrapping the house's north corner, was partially enclosed in the 1950s to enlarge the living room and later still to create a sun room on the north side of the house. A two-story wing, replicating the finish of the original house, was added by the Cecils on the south side of the main block. The appearance of two small unequal-sized ells on the rear (east) elevation dates to the period of Cecil occupancy and later; however, the screened porch, its supports, railing, and ceiling, are original. The interior of the house reflects both its original construction, principally in the finish of the second story bedrooms, and a conventional Colonial Revival-style refitting of the first-story rooms for the Cecils.

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8. Carriage house/garage  
1899-1900  
Contributing building

Designed by Mr. Smith and erected by Mr. Hadlow, this building was originally a carriage house and stable for Mr. Beadle and subsequently altered for his use as a garage. The rectangular pebble-dash covered frame building stands on a brick apron partially inset into grade and is covered by a hip roof. The east front elevation has a conventional-width garage opening at its south end, a doorway with a nine-pane above two-panel door, and a wide, later enlarged opening at the north end. The original dormer, fitted with paired six-pane above sheathed-panel doors, provided access to the hay loft. Windows, some with eight-over-eight sash, are positioned in the other three elevations. The interior has a later poured cement floor, tongue-and-groove sheathed walls above the apron, and the sheathed partition/enclosure for access to the loft.

9. Reception/Ticket Center  
1994  
Noncontributing building

The steady increase of visitation to Biltmore Estate during the 1980s (the number more than doubled from 361,000 in 1979 to 750,000 in 1993) gave rise to the need for a larger reception and ticket center than the existing one (#4) standing just outside the gate. This site, just north of the junction of the approach and service roads, was chosen for its obvious convenience to both estate staff and guests. The Atlanta architectural firm, Barber & Serber, drew on the architectural vocabulary established for the estate in the 1890s in its design of this substantial one-story on basement H-plan building erected by Metric Construction Company. The basement level, partially inset in the hillside, is brick and enhanced with decorative string courses; the windows have over-scale stone lintels reminiscent of those on the Entrance Lodge. The main elevations are covered with pebble dash, enframed with brick quoins, and generally symmetrical in appearance if not in detail. The red tile hip roof, crowned by a multi-pane cupola, is inset with the lower hip roofs covering each of the four ends of the "H." The well-detailed interior, featuring a large, central reception area, is finished with brick and carpeted floors, pebble-dash walls, and oak woodwork. The ticket sales counter is positioned on the south side and a small auditorium, featuring an estate orientation film, is located on the north side.

10. Admission Booth  
1994  
Noncontributing building

This small, well-detailed building also repeats the century-old architectural vocabulary of the estate's late-nineteenth century buildings in its brick apron foundation and pebble-dash walls, dark brown painted woodwork, bracketed eaves, and expansive red tile hip roof with inset horizontal vents. The walls of the one room (with lavatory) building are mostly glazed. It is used by the estate security force as a ticket checkpoint for visitors to the estate.

11. Approach Road including seven bridges, 11a-11g  
1889-1895  
Eight contributing structures

Through the course of his engagement on Biltmore Estate, 1888-1895, two projects became uppermost in the mind of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.: the Approach Road and the Arboretum. The Approach Road, a nearly three-mile drive from the junction of the Biltmore and Asheville approaches up to the Esplanade, was the

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principal access to the house; however, Olmsted rightly perceived its larger role as the means by which to fix the luxury of the estate and its function as a winter retreat in the minds of Mr. Vanderbilt's guests. In short, the Approach Road was the point on which the visitor received his first sustained impression of the estate, and Olmsted crafted the road, its architectural features, and its dense largely evergreen plant materials to provide the physical and psychological sensations of luxury, richness, ascent, and approach to a building of great importance. The Approach Road is a three-mile long picturesque thread of scenery devised by Olmsted to link the mansion and its grounds through the larger estate landscape to the outside world and to mark the separation from it.

Writing to George Vanderbilt on 12 July 1889, Mr. Olmsted articulated his conception of the Approach Road:

I suggest that the most striking and pleasing impression of the Estate will be obtained if an approach can be made that shall have throughout a natural and comparatively wild and secluded character; its borders rich with varied forms of vegetation, with incidents growing out of the vicinity of springs and streams and pools, steep banks and rocks, all consistent with the sensation of passing through the remote depths of a natural forest. Such scenery to be maintained with no distant outlook and no open spaces spreading from the road; with nothing showing obvious art, until the visitor passes with an abrupt transition into the enclosure of the trim, level, open, airy, spacious, thoroughly artificial (sic) Court, and the Residence with its orderly dependencies, breaks suddenly and fully upon him.

In planning the Approach Road Olmsted drew on his long experience, his travels in England beginning in 1850, his readings of the important eighteenth and early-nineteenth century English landscape theorists and practitioners, and upon the writings of A.J. Downing whose advice on the design of an approach road for an estate, published in *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* in 1859, could also serve as a description of Olmsted's intention. Olmsted briefly described the proposed course of the road in his report and noted that its route would be marked on a map sent to Mr. Vanderbilt and marked by stakes on the ground when he visited next. The general path that Olmsted outlined was followed; however, adjustments were made on the ground in consultation with engineers W.A. Thompson and James G. Gall, Jr. Mr. Gall, who had worked for Olmsted at Central Park, was responsible for the extraordinary, subtle grading of the Approach Road that marks its ascent from 1,980 feet above sea level at its foot to 2,230 feet at the point where it gives onto the Esplanade.

Progress on the Approach Road can be traced through a series of letters that Olmsted wrote on the subject to Mr. Thompson, Mr. Gall, Mr. Vanderbilt, Mr. McNamee, and Mr. Beadle through the course of six years through the summer of 1895 and Mr. Olmsted's last visit to the estate. Beginning with his letter to Mr. Gall of 11 November 1889, Olmsted is insistent on close attention to every detail concerning the laying out and construction of the road and the planting of its borders. Nothing escaped his attention, and everything seen on his visits to the estate was discussed and resolved on the ground and often revisited in letters back to the principals here from Brookline. Two of the last important letters were written to Mr. Beadle on the 26 and 27 of July 1895, after Olmsted had returned to Brookline from Biltmore where in May he had posed for John Singer Sargent amid kalmias and rhododendrons on the side of the Approach Road. The fact that he repeated much of the advice and language of the first letter in the second one on the 27 bears out Olmsted's concern for the Approach Road and the mental confusion and weariness that increasingly marked the last years of his professional work.

The nearly three-mile paved length of the Approach Road divides into two almost equal halves that Olmsted speaks of as the "Lower Approach Road" and the "Upper Approach Road." The lower Approach Road generally parallels Ram Branch whose course was rechanneled, impounded, and otherwise manipulated for

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scenic effect; it was along this section of the road, where water was visible in stream or pond, or felt to be present, that Olmsted sought to produce a "sub-tropical luxuriance" in the vegetation:

The term "sub-tropical luxuriance" is, of course, used only suggestively, for the result required is to be brought about largely by a profuse use of plants that simply, in certain respects, will produce a distant, broad resemblance to the landscape qualities of a tropical forest; more so, at least, than we are accustomed to see, or than would be practicable with such a slight contraction of resources as we should have, for example, about New York, or even Washington, but that will form compositions more nearly approaching the general landscape character such as are to be seen further south than any that are the result of spontaneous growth near Biltmore. Absolute luxuriance is mainly to be provided for by manure, but only here and there is much manure wanted. The special effect aimed at is to be obtained chiefly by choice and arrangement of plants. Still do not neglect what I have before said about manure at special points, and, more particularly, with reference to the very rich feeding of grape-vines on the upper hillside, --grape-vines to grow eventually up the larger trees and to hang from them in the manner of the great climbers of a tropical forest.

Bear in mind . . . that Mr. Vanderbilt and his guests nearly always miss the best of the (spring) bloom and will continue to do so. It is the distant, lasting and constant effect of bodies of foliage that we must have always permanently in view. Everything else must give way to what is desirable for this purpose (FLO to CDB, 26 July 1895).

Documentary photographs indicate that portions of the plantings along the lower Approach Road and Ram Branch achieved the luxuriance that Olmsted urged on Beadle; however, they were probably relatively short lived because of the costs of replantings and maintenance. The dense, lively carpet of varied ground covers, Olmsted's "smooth leaved evergreens," that stretched from the edges of the road--and actually grew onto it at points--to massed plantings of rhododendrons, kalmias, abelia, etc., have been replaced by mowed grass through the course of the twentieth century. However, the shrubs, small trees, and evergreen (hemlock, white pine) and deciduous canopy and background trees, which formed the succeeding three layers of plant material, largely remain in place.

Olmsted carefully placed the foot of the Approach Road at the edge of the Swannanoa River bottomlands where the grade begins its ascent. After about 600 feet the road crosses Ram Branch on the first (#11a) of six bridges occurring along the path of the Approach Road. The first five are stone, and four of those are original, while the sixth bridge (#11g), just below the point where the road reaches a plateau, is of brick, incongruous and inexplicable. The stone for these bridges, and others punctuating the roadways of the estate, came principally from the estate quarry, which lay on the immediate east side of the Approach Road, the Pearson, and other quarries in Buncombe County, or the quarries of W.K. Troy at Balfour in Henderson County. The bridges were gently merged with the landscape through grading or plantings, and built of random quarry-faced ashlar masonry with vouissors outlining the arch above the stream bed and low sides that gently ramp to the center and terminate near grade in a "natural" fashion with a large stone or assembled stones partially inset in the earth. The tops of the bridge sides and low retaining walls which occur along the Approach Road are capped with blocks of quarry-faced stone set perpendicular to the roadbed.

Some four to five hundred feet further on its ascent, the path of Interstate 40, elevated on tall coursed quarry-faced stone piers, crosses the Approach Road. The interstate highway crosses over the old estate quarry on the east side of the Approach Road, which had filled with water and was treated as a natural pond. The pond was filled with construction debris and covered over; however, the original stone retaining wall separating it from the Approach Road remains in place and continues south in a curvilinear fashion and engages the second (#11b)

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of the road's stone bridges. Ram Branch flows along the west side of the Approach Road for some 800 feet. It crosses back under the road below the third (#11c) stone bridge which is positioned at the edge of the largest clearing punctuating its path. Here the Approach Road, flanked by a low retaining wall on its east side, curves to the east around ponds while a branch is impounded on its flow into Ram Branch and forms a shallow pond on the west side of the road. The low stone wall, appearing at times as stones placed on grade, is more rustic in character than those seen earlier; it recesses at two points in its course to receive stone benches (however, no provision is made for visitors to park and sit). This scenic episode is one of two occurring on the lower Approach Road. The second one came about ca. 1932 when a relatively sharp curve in the Approach Road was eliminated and the road's path straightened for the convenience of motoring visitors. The 1890s stone bridge (#11e) which carried the now-abandoned path of the road over Ram Branch was kept and catches the eye on the west side of the Approach Road; the bridge's upper stone sides and coping were robbed for other projects. (Surviving nearby, at the edge of the woodland, is one of the original metal hydrants which provided water for wetting down the road in dry, dusty seasons.) A stone replacement bridge (#11d), of sympathetic character but of decidedly lesser workmanship (and largely unnoticed by visitors), carries the Approach Road forward to the fifth crossing of Ram Branch. The appearance of this last stone bridge (#11f), older than the one just noted, is of different character than the first four bridges. In elevation its sides have tumbled stone masonry in a three-part panel-like configuration with a flat top and a brick arch above the stream bed. The similar stone extensions on its north end appear to date to the straightening of the road. This section of the Approach Road continues for another 1,200 feet alongside Ram Branch to the southeast before it turns course to the southwest for the ascent to the house. The character of the upper Approach Road, now separated from Ram Branch (and any other water course), changes as it moves through a woodland landscape whose plantings and increasing openness suggest its higher elevation. About midway in its length Busbee Road links it with the Busbee Road Gate (#19) nearby to the east, while the west stretch of the same road (following the course of old Shiloh Road) continues west to an overflow parking lot and the complex of service buildings (#43-52).

The Approach Road continues its progress to the south where it makes a sharp turn, across a brick bridge (#11g) with low brick coping, and then continues to the west and southwest, onto a grade that is essentially level with the Esplanade. Driveways on the north and south lead into large paved parking lots erected in five efforts between ca. 1975 and ca. 1994. The steep topography here is reflected in the stone retaining wall on the north side of the Approach Road that carries up to the gates opening onto the Esplanade.

Although the "sub-tropical luxuriance" Olmsted intended for the lower Approach Road has long since been lost, movement along the Approach Road remains a sublime landscape experience and a major accomplishment of a man whose genius is seen throughout the grounds of the home estate.

12. Path of Interstate 40  
ca. 1964  
Noncontributing structure

The divided double-lane path of the interstate highway was built on an east/west axis through the north end of the estate. By design and necessity it is located along, but inside, the edge of woodlands and up from the fertile bottomlands beside the French Broad and Swannanoa Rivers. While its physical presence represents a real intrusion in the historic landscape, and it separates the extreme north end of the estate into a separate tract, the elevation of its path above the estate roadways partially offsets its impact. The supports carrying it above the Approach Road are covered with a coursed ashlar masonry, and similar masonry is utilized on the supports carrying it over Wendover Road. Its path over the service road, not then a publicly-used drive, has exposed concrete piers.

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13. Estate Residence  
17 Cedarcliff Road  
ca. 1915-1925  
Contributing Building

The origin of this house, standing on the extreme east edge of the estate and facing onto Cedarcliff Road, which here forms a boundary between the estate and adjoining Biltmore Forest, remains unconfirmed. Dating from the late 1910s or early 1920s, it is first remembered as the residence of Louis Shelton who succeeded Mr. Beadle in 1950 as general superintendent of Biltmore Estate. It was next the home of Don Burleson, general manager of the estate. The house has served as the residence of Biltmore Company employees thereafter. The two-story frame house is essentially rectangular in plan (with a shallow gable-front ell), sheathed with wood shingles, and covered with a low hip roof of asphalt shingles with exposed purlins and rafter ends. The shingles kick out at the bottom of the second story in the manner of a string course. Single, paired, and triple windows are fitted with nine-over-one sash in molded surrounds. The one-story hip roof (east) front porch has been enclosed as an entrance hall and sun room; a one-room, one-story ell stands on the rear. The finish of the asymmetrical-plan interior, with pine floors and wall board and plaster walls, includes original fabric (five, horizontal panel doors) and mantels, cornices, and other fittings installed by occupants in the second half of the twentieth century.

14. Patio Shelter  
ca. 1975  
Noncontributing structure

Erected as an entertainment pavilion, this appealing shed roof building has a cement floor and wood piers that support wood lattice along its long sides. A stone and brick barbecue stands at its northwest end.

15. Garage  
ca. 1915-1925  
Contributing building

Probably contemporary with the house, this one-story with loft rectangular building is sheathed in board and batten and covered with a jerkinhead roof of sheet metal. Paired conventional garage openings, with overhead doors, are symmetrically positioned on the front, facing Cedarcliff Road, while the ends have windows. An enclosed two-stall garage shed has been added on the rear. The interior has a cement floor.

16. Equipment Shed  
ca. 1950-1960  
Noncontributing building

This simple four-stall shelter was erected to provide cover for equipment used in landscape maintenance of the estate. It has a dirt floor, simple timber uprights, and sheet metal shed roof. One of the bays has been enclosed with vertical boards for secured storage.

17. (former) Landscape Maintenance House  
ca. 1968-1972  
Noncontributing building

This simple two-story rectangular building, standing on a cement block foundation, sheathed with brown-painted board and batten, and covered with a side-gable sheet metal roof, was erected as a gathering house for



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the maintenance, roads, and landscape crews working under the direction of Don Burleson, who served as general manager of the estate from the 1960s to 1984. Paired doors on the front open into the first-story storage area while deck stairs on the south end rise to the second-story meeting area. Window openings hold two-over-two horizontal sash.

18. Apartment Building  
ca. 1974  
Noncontributing building

The origin of this simple rectangular two-level building remains to be confirmed. The first story is built of cement blocks and encloses utility areas while the second level is frame and sheathed with board and batten and contains a small apartment. It is covered with a side-gable asphalt shingle roof.

- 19-19a. Busbee Road Gate House  
37 Cedarcliff Road  
ca. 1923  
One contributing building, one contributing structure

On the 1896 "Guide Map of Biltmore Estate," the Busbee Gate stood at the east foot of Busbee Road where it intersected Browntown Road. A gate and entrance to the estate existed at this location for about twenty-five years until 1920 when 1,461.32 acres lying on the east side of the estate, between the mansion (and the residual estate) and Hendersonville Road (US 25), was conveyed to the Biltmore Estate Company as the site of a new, exclusive residential park named Biltmore Forest. The old gate, standing within the bounds of the separated acreage, was abandoned and lost; a new gate was established on Busbee Road to mark the common boundary of Biltmore Estate and Biltmore Forest. The new gates (#19a), held by dressed stone piers topped with Gothic Revival-style metal lanterns, were linked by contemporary iron fencing to the newly-built gate-keeper's cottage. The gates were designed in 1923 by the firm of Smith & Carrier, which probably also designed the cottage.

The Busbee Road Gate House is a handsome one-story-with-attic masonry cottage standing on a full basement, with rough-cast stucco elevations enframed and enhanced with pronounced cut-and-gouged brick quoins and dressings. The gable-front house, with an entrance porch inset in its southeast corner, is essentially rectangular in plan with shallow, centered eaves on its other three, generally symmetrical elevations. It is covered with a tall hip roof of red tiles that has a clipped gable above the façade; the side bays are covered with like jerkinhead roofs while the rear bay has a hip roof. Typical of such period cottages, the window openings vary in size and are fitted with paired, triple, and four-part eight-pane casement windows on the main level and eight-over-eight sash windows in the basement which has a ground level entrance on the rear. The interior has the typical finish of better small houses of the 1920s. The gate house is now an employee residence.

20. Lone Pine Reservoir  
1899  
Contributing structure

The matter of a sufficient water supply for the estate was the second item addressed by Frederick Law Olmsted in his memorandum to Mr. Vanderbilt of 12 July 1889. A shortage of water, at times, interrupted work on the mansion, and the problem persisted after its completion until the acreage comprising the Busbee Mountain watershed was purchased. Waterworks were created on Busbee Mountain which, in turn, fed the estate by gravity. The single-sheet plan and elevation for "Lone Pine Reservoir" is dated July 1899. A second sheet, entitled "Sketch Showing Finished Walls of Lone Pine Reservoir," is also dated July 1899. The designer is not

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identified; whether he was Richard Sharp Smith or a civil engineer in Asheville (or another draftsman) is not known. The reservoir, capable of holding some 2.2 million gallons of water, was built, and it served as the principal supply point for the Biltmore Estate until 1992 when the estate went on the Asheville city water system for its drinking and domestic supply. The reservoir continues to serve as the supply station for the gardens, greenhouses, irrigation, and other agricultural and landscape uses. Measuring 100 feet by 200 feet, the reservoir is a rectangular brick well sunk into the earth near the top of Lone Pine Hill; it is enclosed by a woven wire security fence. Its exposed eighteen-inch-thick brick walls vary in height due to a slight shift in grade; they are capped by terra cotta tile laid on a 45-degree angle to drain into the pool. The northeast head of the reservoir is the most visible section and it is enhanced by a five-part recessed-panel face. The long side walls step down twice; a short two-panel section abutting the head gives to a lower three-panel section which in turn drops to the level about a foot in height of the remaining side walls and the southwest foot.

21. Filter House  
ca. 1899-1900  
Contributing building

Located some 125 feet below the Lone Pine Reservoir, the filter house is contemporary with it and serves, as its name implies, as the filter station for the estate water supply. Although the designer of the building is not known, its high quality and level of finish, replicating the established vocabulary for estate buildings, suggests either Richard Sharp Smith or Richard Howland Hunt as the architect. The small rectangular one-story building has a brick apron capped by a molded stone course, pebble-dash elevations with brick dressings and quoins, and a slate-covered hip roof with decorative exposed rafter ends. A broad segmental-arched opening on the west front is fitted with a center door flanked by four-over-four sash windows; the vertical sheathing in the door's lower panel, below nine glass panes, is matched by panels below the windows and in the three-part blind transom above. The north and south side walls have four symmetrical window openings, each holding arch-headed six-over-six sash. The rear (east) wall is blind. The interior has a poured concrete floor, exposed brick walls, and contains a very large metal tank with a charcoal filtration system.

22. Biltmore House  
1890-1895  
Contributing building

Biltmore House, built for George Washington Vanderbilt as the seat of a baronial estate that swelled to 120,000 acres, and today the centerpiece of the residual estate of 6,825 acres, is at once the largest private house in the United States, the masterpiece and culmination of the architectural career of Richard Morris Hunt, and the most imposing and sophisticated emblem of America's Gilded Age. In short, it occupies an absolutely unique position in the architectural and social history of the United States, and it stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the great country houses of the period built in England and France, including Mentmore and Waddesdon Manor designed by the French architect Gabriel-Hippolyte-Alexandre Destailleur (1822-1896), who was a contemporary of Mr. Hunt (1827-1895). Messrs. Hunt and Vanderbilt had visited Waddesdon Manor together, and both men were familiar with the French architect's country house work, including newly-built and restored chateaux. Destailleur's houses, including Waddesdon, exercised a large influence over both patron and architect, as did the great country houses of the French Renaissance including the chateaux of Blois and Chambord. Equally influential, without doubt, was the Chateau de Chantilly, which was rebuilt between 1875 and 1882 by Monsieur Daumet for the duc d'Aumale, who welcomed Mr. Vanderbilt and the Hunts as guests on their 1889 trip.

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At this distance, and short of yet further painstaking research, it is unclear just when and how Mr. Vanderbilt's original intention to build a substantial yet fairly modest winter retreat here, at the edge of Asheville, changed course and both he and his architect quickly moved to decisions that produced this landmark in American architectural and social history. The unspoken parallels between the wealth of the Vanderbilt and Rothschild families, and the houses being built by the sons and heirs of those fortunes was one obvious encouragement, and challenge, to both men. The widely-acknowledged handsome appearance of the French Renaissance town house built (1878-1882) at 660 Fifth Avenue for his elder brother William Kissam Vanderbilt, that established the French Renaissance Revival chateau-style on Fifth Avenue, may have influenced George Vanderbilt as it did others who commissioned the design of a series of important houses for town, country, and Newport. Finally, however, the shared Francophile interests of Mr. Vanderbilt and his architect, who was educated at the *École des Beaux Arts*, worked for a period in France and was, at times, taken for a Frenchman. Their close friendship, developed through the course of Hunt's work on the Vanderbilt Mausoleum, and no shortage of ambition on the part of both men, secured the course of the house. While the general character of the mansion was moving to resolution in the offices and drafting rooms of the Hunt firm in the spring of 1889, Mr. Vanderbilt and Mr. and Mrs. Hunt made their now famous trip to England and France where they visited country houses, old and new, bought books and photographs for reference, sketched and gathered architectural details (Hunt), and bought rugs, furnishings, pictures, and bric-a-brac (Mr. Vanderbilt).

The construction of Biltmore House involved a host of masons, stonecutters, carpenters, metalworkers, stone and wood carvers, plasterers, painters, and related craftsmen, together with the principal contractor D.C. Weeks. Their work and the receipt of materials was supervised by Mr. Hunt's agent Richard Sharp Smith, who was on hand when work began in the summer of 1890 and who remained on site through the essential completion of the house in the summer/fall of 1895, its opening with a house party at Christmas 1895, and into the summer of 1896 when portions of the interior decoration were completed and installed. The fine craftsmanship employed on Biltmore House was matched by the best of materials from the major suppliers throughout the United States, together with brick and tile produced by Mr. Vanderbilt's brick works and the products of his Asheville Woodworking Company. The limestone sheathing the mansion's walls was supplied by Hollowell Stone Company of Bedford, Indiana, and most of the cement by the J.B. Speed Company of Louisville, Kentucky.

George Vanderbilt occupied rooms in Biltmore House in fall 1895, opened it to his family at a festive house party at Christmas, and used the estate as a seasonal residence until his death on 6 March 1914. Thereafter the house was occupied intermittently by his widow until the marriage of his daughter Cornelia to John Francis Amherst Cecil in April 1924. Biltmore House was the primary residence of the Cecils until 1930 when the estate and the principal rooms of the mansion were opened to the public. With the failure of their marriage, Mrs. Cecil departed the estate; however, Mr. Cecil maintained his residence in the bachelors' wing until his death in 1954. Their eldest son George Cecil, who had also resided here since his return to the estate, married Nancy Owen in May 1955. They occupied rooms in the bachelors' wing until 1956 when they removed to Eastcote (#7). At this point Biltmore House ceased to be a family residence. Since then Biltmore House has continued to be operated as a historic house museum, with increasing portions of the house opened to viewing.

While Biltmore House has been the object of critical evaluation and visitors' descriptions since the model was produced in 1889, few writers have matched Montgomery Schulyer's appraisal published in *Architectural Record*, October-December 1895, for its simple clarity and aptness:

It has been Mr. Hunt's great good fortune to have for once, in Biltmore House, an opportunity to design a true chateau, with the surroundings and accessories of nature and of art proper to a chateau, having not only the elaboration and the costliness, but also the magnitude, and above all the detachment, which the scheme requires. . . . The reader cannot fail to note how great an advantage has come from the absence of

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limitations, not alone in cost, for Biltmore House shows no more regardlessness of expense than the palaces of Newport, but in any respect whatever upon the freedom of the designer. . . . Nobody can fail to note the advantage of this freedom in the royal scale of the chateau which he has set upon the plateau converted into a terrace, nor how the architect has used his advantage. The dependencies of the main building here take their place as dependencies, for there is ample room to let them come as they must, and this amplitude is of the utmost value, as enabling the architect to give the sense of freedom, of variety in unity, and of frank expressiveness that forms the charm of the masterpieces of the style he has chosen. Neither can it be overlooked how effective is the contrast between the richness and refinement of the entrance-front, a richness and refinement enhanced by the formal garden which forms the approach, and the comparatively rude vigor and spirit of the opposite front which opens directly upon the wide prospect of the wilderness. Upon this side the sloping revetment that faces the terrace and extends far beyond the house, not only furnishes an effective base for the mansion which stands at its centre, but becomes itself an important member of the architectural composition. Its value is very greatly enhanced by its ingenious masonry, which not only contrasts effectively with the smooth ashlar above, but gives to the basement a texture which is visible and valuable as far as the building can be seen. The front as a whole, and including the stables at one end as well as the terrace wall at the other, is an excellent example of a general balance in composition, and of its advantage, certainly in a country-seat with wild natural surroundings, over a more strict and formal symmetry. The centre, distinctly marked and bounded by its two towers, is emphasized by the expanse of wall of the wing on one side and the low cluster of the stables beyond, and on the other by the emphatic blots of shadow of the loggia and by the terminating terrace-wall. In the other front, as its general scheme made fit, there is a somewhat closer approach to formal symmetry. The masses on each side of the central tower with the attached open staircase, of which the motive, and only the motive, is borrowed from Blois, are equivalent, but they are not equal, and much less identical, and it is to the inequality in their equivalence that the front owes the life and movement it obtains without sacrifice of clearness or of dignity. The roofs are here as successful as the walls they crown and cover, and unite instead of scattering the masses beneath, while there are in their treatment very positive felicities, as in the steep hood of the three-sided bay at the end of what may be called the forest front. I wish that it had been possible to illustrate more fully the detail by which the effect of these dispositions is so much heightened. But the general views suffice to prove that if the architect had an opportunity in its kind unequalled on this side of the ocean--and indeed upon the other, since the old chateaux of like extent with Biltmore House were composed piecemeal and in different generations, and not at a single stroke--he has taken advantage of it to produce a result also in its kind unequalled.

When Schulyer notes "the inequality in their equivalence," in his analysis of the massing of the blocks flanking the façade's center tower, he succinctly describes the architectural principal whose practice animates the entire building. Where strict symmetry would have produced a ponderous building of overwhelming weight and mass, Hunt and his draftsmen created a stately picturesque magnificence which delights and ever engages the eye and the senses. The broad three-story façade, with a fourth, attic level enclosed in the steeply-pitched roof, has a clearly ordered hierarchy of parts, an echoing of architectural elements, and an inventive variety and consistency of finish and detail that creates balance and harmony. Every device, ornament, and motive of French Gothic architecture is used here, with great aplomb, on the parts and the whole of the building where both reserve and generosity strike an essential equilibrium of plain and enriched surfaces. The symmetrical four-stage entrance tower, with its arched doorway and paired windows united in Gothic paneling, is crowned by a balustraded cornice with gargoyles that serves as the base for the richly wrought dormer window inset in the steepest of the house's multiple roofs. The mass of the stair tower and its companion elevator tower on the south is matched by the winter garden to the north of the entrance; the multi-pane windows of the first repeated in the tripartite windows of the latter while the low circular skylight above the staircase echoes both the form

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and function of the winter garden roof. The elevations of the main body of the mansion extend for two bays on either side of this composition, and behind the winter garden, where they meet lateral wings.

On the south a blind arcade echoes the arched heads of the winter garden windows while, on both sides, paired lavishly ornamented third-story wall dormers rise above the finished two-story stone elevations. The east faces of the lateral wings are unequally treated, but with purpose. The south wing, which effectively terminates the façade, is embellished with paired triple windows on the second and third stories in an elaborately wrought frame whose generally rectangular form is mirrored in the roof plane of an offset tower wing on the mansion's southwest corner. That roof feature is then balanced by the form of a six-sided conical roof (engaging the main roof) rising at the north end of the façade and behind the face of the pendant wing simply fitted with single windows at each level. Here a low two-story, two-bay wall section links the wing with a shorter, parallel lateral wing that, in turn, incorporates the projecting porte cochere.

The steeply-pitched slate-covered roof of the mansion, composed of a series of hip roof units covering component blocks, is punctuated with copper clad dormer windows illuminating the fourth story chambers. The elaborate stamped cresting along the ridge lines bears Mr. Vanderbilt's monogram.

A one-story hyphen links the mansion with its stable and carriage house dependency, a large rectangular block, which encloses a central stone-paved service court. The body of the dependency is one-and-a-half stories in height, housing the carriage house in its west end and the stable in the east half, with tack rooms, offices, and a stairwell lining the corridor linking the two. Servant bedrooms and other offices on the second story are illuminated by wall and conventional dormers set in an H-shaped roof. The former stable, with its stalls maintained as booths, has been fitted up as the Stable Restaurant while the carriage house now houses a large gift shop. The former tack rooms, etc., lining the corridor now contain specialty shops (books, sweets, and Christmas), public restrooms, the original service stair, and a guest staircase. The hyphen between the dependency and the mansion on the west side has been renovated as a coffee-bakery counter, and a like space on the east side of the paved court houses an ice cream shop. The dormitory-like servant bedrooms on the second story now house Biltmore Estate's curatorial offices.

On Olmsted's advisement, Mr. Hunt created the great South Terrace as a promenade and viewing platform; in effect, it serves as a pendant to the above dependency, satisfying Olmsted's requirements, including its function as a shelter against the north winds for the loggia and the Ramble, and, as Mr. Schulyer notes, "furnishes an effective base for the mansion." The south elevation of Biltmore House has a two-part appearance dominated by the towered pavilion, engaged and offset at the mansion's southwest corner. The two-story wall to its east features two large arch-headed windows on the first story and a trio of windows at the second story that are engaged with corresponding wall dormers on the third story. The first story of this block contains the library, and Mr. Hunt, acknowledging the mansion's planned use as a winter residence, created the library terrace for outdoor sitting in good weather. In plan and in function it is a critical link between mansion and grounds, and is covered by a metal frame now supporting trumpet creeper and wisteria that shades and perfumes the terrace.

The west elevation of Biltmore House, overlooking the 250-acre Deer-park and likely to be little seen by Mr. Vanderbilt and his guests except from a distance, has a broad, monumental appearance that is in keeping with the scale of his domain that lay largely to the west and on to Mount Pisgah. The rusticated battered wall of the South Terrace continues across the elevation to sheathe the basement of the mansion, containing kitchens, pantries, the swimming pool, etc., and encloses the kitchen service court inset at the north end of the chateau one level below the stable court. Small windows are inset in the thick walls to provide natural light to the service rooms. The principal elevation has an asymmetrical balance and a general three-part composition. A three-story engaged tower, which in plan is due west of the entrance tower on the façade, stands in its near

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center. Mr. Vanderbilt's bedroom is located on the second story of this tower whose windows afford splendid views to Mount Pisgah. It is paired with an identical tower to the north to form the dominant, central feature of the elevation; they flank a three-bay two-story wall plane enlivened with wall dormers whose form repeats those on the front faces of the towers. The shorter, recessed three-bay block of the mansion to the north contains pantries and service rooms. The arched heads of the first-story tower windows, repeated in the triple window between them, is reflected in the form of a one-story arcade that carries southward in front of the mansion's wall linking the "center" tower with the tower pavilion on the mansion's southwest corner. The arcade, originally fitted with a wood deck accessible from the second story hall, parallels the Tapestry Gallery in plan. The windows in the second-story wall behind it illuminate a tier of guest rooms.

The interior plan of Biltmore House is not unlike that of other important country houses of the later nineteenth century erected in England and France, whose organization of spaces provides a series of rooms, halls, and chambers to accommodate large house parties. However, in the United States its breadth of scale distinguishes it from other, smaller rural and suburban mansions of the period while its interior decoration, incorporating the finest iron work, stone and wood carving of the period, including the work of Karl Bitter, shares obvious similarities with the work of the Hunt firm in Newport, including Ochre Court, The Breakers, and Marble House. The entire first story is given over to a series of reception, dining, and leisure rooms accessible from both the main entrance and the porte cochere where a hall in the bachelors' wing links it with the Billiard Room, Banqueting Hall, and a secondary staircase. The principal staircase, visible on the exterior, winds its way to the second, third, and fourth stories of the mansion. Mr. Vanderbilt's bedroom, the companion Louis XV-style bedroom designed for his mother, the Louis XVI-style bedroom, and the principal guest rooms are arranged on the second story together with a large living hall. Additional guest rooms, a less formal hall, and servant's rooms occupy the third story of the house, while the fewer fourth-story rooms are for guests, servants, and storage.

The first-story plan of Biltmore House is arranged along two axial features--the Entrance Hall and the Winter Garden--which exist side by side and, in three dimensional form, effectively meld with each other through the consistent use of limestone for their finish and the employment of arcades to define spaces while allowing easy passage and viewing between them. Biltmore House's first primary axis carries in a straight line from the doors opening from the front terrace into the vestibule, then through a glazed screen into the perpendicular Entrance Hall and on through the doors at its west end into and through the Music Room in the base of the center tower on the west elevation. Paired openings on the Entrance Hall's south side open onto the staircase, enhanced with a splendid metal railing and three-tier iron chandelier, and the Tapestry Gallery. The Winter Garden is positioned immediately beside the hall, on its north side, and sunk some three feet below the level of the hall; flights of steps are set in the four short sides of its octagonal plan. Hunt skillfully surrounded the Winter Garden with an arcaded passage on its east, north, and west sides, and used the passage as the means of access to the Billiard Room, the Banquet Hall, and the Breakfast Room, arrayed on its north side, and the Salon on the west. The second major axis of the first story, visible on its plan but less pronounced in experience, carries on a north/south line. Reflecting the baronial character of the house and the estate, its north head is on the throne on the north wall of the Banquet Hall, and it carries through the Winter Garden, the Entrance Hall, the Tapestry Gallery, and through the west end of the Library, out the paired doors opening onto the library terrace, and beyond the South Terrace into the rolling landscape.

Typical of the era, the interior decoration of these principal reception rooms reflects the important historical periods or themes adopted in the period in America, England, and on the Continent. A high degree of design, craftsmanship, and the best of materials provides an architectural and visual unity and elegance that avoids any hint of incongruity.

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The Billiard Room, an evening retreat for gentlemen, linking the main rooms of the mansion with the bachelors' wing, has a masculine wood paneled character and is furnished with paired billiard tables with hanging lamps, mounted animal heads, leather-covered seating, and an elegant strap work ceiling.

The Banquet Hall, the largest and most imposing room in Biltmore House and, with the Library, among the greatest rooms in the history of nineteenth-century interior decoration in the United States, is a remarkable three-story chamber. Distinguished by the great three-part hooded fireplace enriched with Karl Bitter's "The Return from the Chase" at its west end, the room is also furnished with a set of Flemish tapestries hanging on the north wall, flanking the carved wood throne, and on its south wall, and the organ gallery in its east end with Bitter's five-part frieze "The Contest of the Minstrels." The Banquet Hall is further embellished with the massed flags of the thirteen colonies, mounted animal heads, paired iron chandeliers, and other decorations below a barrel-vaulted beam ceiling that rises seventy-two feet into the air. In an act of great originality that also followed Medieval precedent, Mr. Hunt placed the window openings at the second story level and repeated the arc of the ceiling in great arch-headed windows centered on the north and south walls. A trio of pantries for china and serving, together with the silver vault, is located in the northwest corner, off a service hall linking the Banquet Hall and Breakfast Room.

The Breakfast Room, in the northwest corner of the tier of rooms encircling the Winter Garden, has a domestic, one-story scale; its embossed leather-covered walls, above a marble wainscot, are hung with portraits of the Vanderbilt family. Paired openings in its south wall open into the Salon, a transitional sitting room that opens, in turn, on the south into the Music Room. The Music Room, for reasons that remain unclear, was the only first-story reception room that remained unfinished through the life of Mr. Vanderbilt and, in fact, until its Pugin-influenced scheme was designed by Alan Burnham and installed in the mid-1970s. Situated at the west end of the hall, the Music Room completed the series of rooms encircling the winter garden that, in plan, form the main block of the mansion.

The L-shaped wing to the south comprises the Tapestry Gallery, a long rectangular room positioned parallel with the façade whose floor area is nearly equal to that of the Banquet Hall, and the Library contained in the south wing of the mansion. Three handsome Flemish tapestries, flanking paired Renaissance-style fireplaces, give their name to the Tapestry Gallery; the tapering fireplace hoods are enlivened with painted hunt decorations. The beamed ceiling is also enriched with painted decoration. Portraits of Mr. Vanderbilt and his mother, by John Singer Sargent, together with two portraits of Edith Dresser Vanderbilt by Boldini and James McNeill Whistler, hang here.

As imposing, beautifully detailed, and handsomely furnished as the reception rooms of Biltmore House are, none match the sumptuousness of the Library. The Renaissance Revival-style interior decoration comprises tall double-tier bookcases, fitted with a bracketed iron railing and served by a curved staircase, paneling and cornice work in French walnut, and the dark green marble fireplace supporting Bitter's figures of Hestia and Demeter flanking a central tapestry panel below a richly carved broken pediment. This rich fabric, together with the eighteenth-century painted ceiling, "The Chariot of Aurora" painted by Pellegrini, creates a room embodying Mr. Vanderbilt's lifelong roles as a book collector and an aesthete.

The second story of Biltmore House has an appreciably smaller square footage than the first story, lessened by the areas occupied by the glazed roof of the Winter Garden and the multi-story level of the Banquet Hall. The staircase rises to a landing that gives onto the second floor living hall which is dominated by Seymour Guy's 1873 painting of the family of William Henry Vanderbilt at its west end, and the pendant painting of the family of William A.V. Cecil by Stone Roberts at the east end. Pride of place here is also held by John Singer Sargent's portraits of Richard Morris Hunt and Frederick Law Olmsted.

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The two most important bedrooms in the mansion, occupying the second levels of the paired towers on the west façade, are linked by the oak sitting room. Mr. Vanderbilt's bedroom is located in the "center" tower, furnished with dark heavily-carved Mediterranean-revival furniture and red upholstery and hangings. The adjoining sitting room was originally designated as Mrs. Vanderbilt's bedroom; however, as the house was nearing completion, the room in the pendant north tower, intended as her boudoir, was redesigned in April and August 1895 by Warrington G. Lawrence and designated as her bedroom. Its Louis XV-style interior decoration, furnishings, and gold and purple hangings and upholstery reflect the growing interest in French period rooms by the New York architectural and decorating community including Ogden Codman, who would later collaborate on the French-style interiors of Frederick Vanderbilt's Hyde Park mansion. Somewhat less successful is the Louis XVI-style guest room at the front of Biltmore House, above the entrance, where the sharp contrast of white paneling against red upholstery is jarring. A suite of principal guest rooms is arranged in the area above the Tapestry Gallery and two of them, the Sheraton and Chippendale rooms, are named for the important English cabinetmakers and furnished in those styles. The third floor living hall is less formal than the rooms on the first and second stories, and a suite of guest rooms on this floor include three named for artists Anthony Van Dyck, George Morland, the engraver James Watson, together with a room hung with reproductions of paintings of the Madonna. A final group of guest rooms is contained in a fourth floor area above Mr. and Mrs. Vanderbilt's rooms.

Unlike most English country houses of the period, the kitchens, service rooms, pantries, laundry, and work rooms at Biltmore House are mostly contained in the basement of the mansion together with a series of rooms given to recreation including a large tiled swimming pool which is probably the first of its type installed in a private house in America. The swimming pool and its dressing rooms, a gymnasium, and the bowling alley are accessible from the stair opening below the principal staircase. These spaces connect with the service areas of the mansion, served by two staircases. Here a series of pantries, specialized kitchens, servants' sitting and dining rooms, laundry and ironing rooms, and mechanical rooms all retain their original finish and much of their original furniture.

23. Rampe Douce  
1890-ca. 1893  
Contributing structure

Carrying across the east end of the Esplanade, the Rampe Douce is an imposing masonry staircase linking the Esplanade with the Vista by means of three paired, ramped, and stepped paths which rise in crisscross fashion between four parallel retaining walls. While the architectural borrowing of features and details from the chateaux of the Loire Valley for the design of the mansion has long been acknowledged, little attention has been given to the seventeenth century precedent for the rampe douce. A similar feature used in this way appears at Vaux-le-Vicomte as part of the great architectural and landscape setting for the mansion created for Nicholas Fouquet by his architect Louis Le Vau and garden designer Andre LeNotre, who would later design Versailles for Louis XIV of France. The other architectural reference, also known to both client and architect, was the use of similar features, principally staircases, to link different levels of gardens in England, France, and Italy. While its ostensible function is to provide access from the Esplanade to the Vista, its real purpose is to serve as an architectural pendant to the façade of the mansion and to join it in enclosing the east and west ends of the Esplanade. Here it becomes an important extension of the architectural program, serving in effect the same purpose as the South Terrace and the stable dependency grounding the mansion in its setting and effectively melding architecture and landscape architecture into one grand feature.

The grading of the hillside which became the location of the mansion and its immediate grounds was begun in 1889 and continued into 1890. With the relocation of so much earth and its exposure to the effects of weather,



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Olmsted and Hunt wisely urged on the construction of the walls retaining the Esplanade, those forming the South Terrace, the Rampe Douce, and other features as a means of preventing erosion. These features, including the Walled Garden, were effectively completed well before the mansion, and plantings were advanced in conjunction with them where possible. Early documentary photographs of the mansion under construction, taken from the Vista, show the Rampe Douce completed and the Vista planted in grass by the time the chateau walls were rising to the second story. Early images looking from the mansion terrace east to the Vista are fewer, and undated, but one valuable photograph shows the Rampe Douce nearing completion with only the central balustrade to be set in place.

The faces of the four parallel walls of the Rampe Douce are sheathed in quarry-faced ashlar limestone masonry except for their finished, paneled railings which carry on diagonals reflecting the gentle ascents. Centered in the front (west) face of the Rampe Douce, at ground level, are a trio of bronze turtles occupying shallow individual niches that spill water into three half-circular pools. At the north and south ends of the structure, the feet of the ramps are marked by arch-headed alcove fountains, in the second wall plane, with wall-mounted dolphins spilling water into engaged basins. The ramps, laid in herringbone-pattern brick with shallow steps in the center, rise to a terrace in the center of the Rampe Douce. Here a second trio of fountains, again recessed in arch-headed alcoves and fitted with stone shells spilling water into shallow pools, are inset in the third wall plane at the back of the terrace. These fountains are flanked by doors opening into mechanical service rooms. The second, middle pairing of ramps then rise out, to the north and south respectively, to landings, where they double back and rise (between the third and fourth walls) to a balustraded terrace at the center and top of the Rampe Douce.

24. Vista Pergola  
ca. 1896-1899; restored 2000  
Contributing structure

The Vista, an axial greensward with a gentle ascent to the east, behind the Rampe Douce, lined with paired rows of lindens and back-planted with hemlocks, is crowned by a simple pergola. Whether the pergola was in place in 1895 when Mr. Vanderbilt opened the mansion is not known; however, its hexagonal shape appears to be an existing feature on a plan dated 6 December 1898 by the Olmsted Brothers. Entitled "Preliminary Plan for Summit of Vista," the symmetrical scheme included a pair of platform seats, facing to the northwest and southwest to radial clearings in the woodlands, and five additional features appearing to be sculpture or urns. The proposal was not implemented. Neither was an earlier, fanciful suggestion, represented by a surviving watercolor prepared by Warrington G. Lawrence prior to Mr. Hunt's death, which proposed an octagonal summer house with a bell-cast metal roof. The pergola is a hexagonal-shaped structure with a mortared brick floor, simple limestone columns, and an open timber-frame hip roof. The present, ca. 1979, white marble statue of Diana, on a limestone base, is signed "Giannoni Sergio--Ulderigo Pietra Santa (,) Italy." It replaced an earlier, damaged statue of Diana.

- 25a-e. Mansion Gardens: Esplanade, South Terrace, The Pergola, Italian Garden, and the Ramble  
1890-1895  
Four contributing structures, one contributing site

These five landscape features, comprising the front lawn of Biltmore House (the Esplanade), the South Terrace, The Pergola, and the Italian Garden, are all physically linked to the mansion, together with The Ramble. They comprise what Frederick Law Olmsted originally conceived as the pleasure gardens of the mansion, between it and the Walled Garden that was originally proposed for raising vegetables and fruits. Had Biltmore House been intended for use in the late spring, summer, and/or autumn seasons, the gardens would likely have been much

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more extensive, given the scale of the mansion; however, its restricted seasonal use prompted Mr. Olmsted to keep the development of garden areas small and close to the house.

Olmsted articulated his views for the proposed development of the mansion gardens in his letter of 2 March 1889 to Mr. Hunt. After noting "that the greater part of the time the winter and spring air is of temperature pleasant to anyone exercising even moderately, and is of a bracing quality," as a compensating circumstance for the downtrodden character of the lands, he continued:

The other (compensating circumstance) is the advantage offered for making it pleasant out-of-doors; that is to say, first, for a short stroll or a promenade (sic) which shall be as it were a part of the house--from which while walking the great view westward--the valley and the distance with its far-away snow-capped hills--can be enjoyed. (This would suggest more terrace work, closely associated with the house than your plan yet provides.)

But no promenade (sic) south of the house with a western outlook would be available for use with an icy northwester sweeping down the valley doubled in force as it would by the current deflected and concentrated by the walls of the house. Hence a place out-of-doors is wanted which attractive at all times in a different way from the terrace, will be available for a ramble even during a northwester and in the depth of winter. This would be a glen-like place with narrow winding paths between steepish slopes with evergreen shrubbery, in the lee of the house on the southeast. Look at the map and you will see also that a terrace thrown out southwardly from the house, a little but not much lower than the floor of the house, would still further fend off the cold winds from such a place and make it more secluded and genial.

This last paragraph provides the background for the later construction of the South Terrace, The Pergola, and The Ramble. The opening of his next paragraph provided for the Esplanade (#25a):

One thing more. East of the entire length of the house you have in view, I presume, a broad plateau; . . .

That broad plateau, later called the "court" and finally the Esplanade, is a large formal rectangular court enclosed by the mansion at its northwest end, the Rampe Douce on its southeast end, and paired rows of tulip poplars on its long sides which are both retained by stone walls. The Approach Road opens onto the Esplanade in its east corner through limestone piers supporting partially gilded decorative iron gates. These piers, mounted with iron lanterns and crowned by female sphinxes, the gates, and the like fencing connecting them to the Rampe Douce are matched in pendant fashion in the south corner of the Esplanade where the drive continues down to the Walled Garden. The drive carries around the rectangular lawn in the center of the Esplanade, up to an asphalt-paved parking area in front of the mansion, and back down the opposite site toward the south gate where it joins the parking area between the lawn and the Rampe Douce. A large molded stone circular basin, holding a jet fountain, is centered and inset in the lawn. Through the course of construction, from 1890 to mid-1895, the Esplanade served as the work yard and the terminus of the estate railroad which carried building materials to the house site from Biltmore station.

The series of documentary photographs made during the construction of Biltmore House indicate that the ground comprising the South Terrace (#25b) is earth moved here during the grading of the Esplanade and the house site. To prevent wash, the battered limestone retaining walls enclosing the South Terrace were built first before the foundations of the house. The terrace is enclosed by a finished parapet wall, about four feet high with a tea house engaged in its southwest corner. A double flight of balustraded stairs link it with the library terrace, and a related staircase connects with the Italian Garden and the front terrace. At the south a staircase descends

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to the level of The Pergola and on to The Ramble. Although the South Terrace has always been used for enjoying the views, its changing secondary uses have altered its appearance through the years. The earliest known plan for the terrace (and The Pergola), dated 11 October 1890, shows a four-square parterre at the south end and the remainder of the terrace occupied by a tennis court. The tennis court is cited in a caption in *Biltmore Photo-Gravures* (1900); the parterre was not implemented. In the early twentieth century, the sunken tennis court was grass covered as was most of the terrace; the four figural sculptures now gracing the terrace are in place, together with evergreen plants in large Italian terra cotta pots and jars. A swimming pool, built to designs prepared by Charles E. Waddell, dated 17 June 1920, and measuring approximately 120 by 46 feet, was installed and occupied the center of the terrace, inside an evergreen hedge, until ca. 1990 when it was removed. The hole was filled, and the terrace covered with fine gravel and treated as a promenade.

Olmsted, ever anxious to create advantage from opportunity, designed The Pergola (#25c) along the southeast side of the South Terrace where its tall stone walls were warmed by the morning sun. A row of limestone columns and piers supports the wooden trellis that he planted with vines; the shaded area was furnished with Parisian slat benches. Today, this is one of the cool retreats in the garden.

Of all the garden areas comprising the pleasure grounds, the Italian Garden (#25d) has retained perhaps the highest degree of integrity to the present and its appearance is little changed from that seen in early twentieth century views. The long, narrow, essentially architectonic pleasure ground is set parallel with the Esplanade and framed on the north by its stone retaining wall. A geometric hemlock hedge, inset with evergreen shrubs in large molded Italian terra cotta pots, carries along its south border where the grade drops into The Ramble. In the early 1890s, its design underwent a series of changes until the present scheme, with three shaped and molded shallow basins flanked by grass-covered panels at each end, was resolved. A planter(s) in the center basin contains papyrus, ornamental grasses, and other exotics while the flanking basins are planted with water lilies and lotus. The four, remarkably plain, double-seated limestone benches, positioned in the enlarged gravel areas between the basins, are original. So, too, are the five symmetrically-placed seats, protected by woven metal frames for vines, which are positioned against the garden's north wall. The only visible change from the original scheme is the loss of vines that originally covered the north wall, probably a matter of changing aesthetics.

A documentary photograph shot looking northwest toward the mansion, apparently from the brick bridge at the southeast end of The Ramble (#25e), shows the paths and staircases of The Ramble in place by 27 July 1893. The Hunt office drawings for the staircases are dated 18 January 1892. This is one of the relatively few views of the period that is precisely dated and indicates the progress made on the development of the mansion gardens well ahead of the chateau whose second story walls were beginning to rise. The Ramble is a generally rectangular area flanked on the north by the Italian Garden, on the west by The Pergola, and on the south by the Walled Garden. It enjoys a gently rolling topography that spills into a projecting tongue, enclosed within the curve of the drive leading down from the Esplanade to the Walled Garden, where it terminates at the brick bridge (#6c) carrying the road. The Ramble was originally to be planted with some 500 varieties of flowering shrubs, small trees, and perennials. While its curvilinear paths and stone staircases remain intact, the plant material, mostly shrubs, small trees, and perennials with the exception of a great copper beech, is virtually all post-Olmsted in age but replicates his intentions and is sympathetic with the scale of The Ramble.

26a-e. The Walled Garden Complex: the Walled Garden, Conservatory, Gardener's Cottage, and Stable  
1890-1895

One contributing site, three contributing buildings, one noncontributing building

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This complex of garden features, situated downgrade from Biltmore House and to its southeast in an area that Olmsted identified early on, owes its appearance to the collaborations of Frederick Law Olmsted, Richard Morris Hunt, and Richard Sharp Smith. One of the earliest specific references to its architectural design appears in a letter of 30 October 1891 from Mr. Smith to Mr. Hunt:

This day I send you by express blue prints of Vegetable Garden Walls for your approval. I have also enclosed a copy for Mr. Olmsted should you think it necessary he should see what we are about to do.

I don't think he has been consulted on the changes and additions, viz. setting back of Gardener's Cottage twelve feet from entrance and the retreat and tool house northwest corner of garden. These changes seem to meet with Mr. Vanderbilt's approval. P. S. I will make 1/4" scale drawings for Gardener's house at my earliest convenience.

Later, on 26 December 1891, Mr. Smith sends the architect blueprints of the "Plan of Palm House Terrace and Framing plans for Gardener's cottage." And a month later on 29 January 1892, he again wrote Mr. Hunt sending him three blueprints "of Gardener's Cottage showing changes of windows as suggested by Mr. R.H. Hunt and Mr. Vanderbilt:"

Mr. Vanderbilt expressed a wish to provide the gardener with a Bathroom and if possible to have it on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor or in place of pantry on 1<sup>st</sup> floor. I have arranged it on 2nd floor with a small lean to dormer. If not satisfactory please let me know.

Two weeks later, on 13 February, Mr. Smith wrote Mr. Hunt about the interior woodwork for the gardener's cottage, whether it was to be yellow pine or oak, and happily reported "as the work on the Gardener's House is progressing rapidly and weather permitting the roof will be on in the course of three weeks." On 14 May 1892, in a "general report on the whole work" at Biltmore, Mr. Smith reported the gardener's cottage being "roofed, tarpapered, and waiting roof tiles." In regard to the "Vegetable Garden Walls," he reported the "east north and 2/3 of west wall are ready for tiles" and that the south wall foundations were in. Work on the Gardener's Cottage advanced through 1892, and on 15 November Mr. Smith wrote Mr. Hunt asking what colors to paint the cottage rooms. Meanwhile, the design of the adjoining stable was in process. On 19 December Mr. Smith advised his employer:

By this mail I send blue prints Nos. 53 and 54B for Gardener's Stable. Mr. Vanderbilt particularly wished as much as possible hidden from view from house. The arrangement of the buildings and yard approaches are approved by Mr. Olmsted.

In March 1893 Smith wrote Hunt twice concerning the gates for the vegetable garden, sending a blueprint for his approval on the 30th.

These quotations from Richard Sharp Smith's surviving letter book indicate the advance on this complex of garden facilities in the early 1890s. The status of this complex was described by Olmsted on 7 January 1893 in a letter to M. Croux, a nurseryman in France, whom he had visited in 1892 and was now consulting in regard to fruit plantings and culture:

By examination of the accompanying drawings and photographs, you will see that our plans for the residence part of the undertaking include provision for a garden of four acres (one and six-tenths hectares), which will be situated in a cove of wooded hills, sheltered on all sides but the South. Walls about it have already been built, and the photographs will show you its present condition in all

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superficial respects. The inclination of the ground being too steep for convenient cultivation, we have divided the garden by terrace walls. These, as well as the outer walls, are built of local stone, which is a very dark, although unusually micaceous, gneiss. The estate contains a large farm, market garden and orchards; products of all of which are mainly to be sold in the town of Asheville. . . . These will also furnish the main part of the vegetables and fruit required for the residence. The garden of the residence, therefore, is intended mainly to supply earlier and choicer vegetables and fruits, and flowers for decorative purposes.

Subsequent to this letter, Mr. Vanderbilt determined that this entire garden complex would become a pleasure garden, and the extent to which any of the proposed espaliered fruit trees were installed is unconfirmed. The drawings for the garden walls survive as do those for the tool house and retreat. While the walls were built according to plan, the retreat proposed for the northwest corner, convenient to the house by way of The Ramble, was not.

The Walled Garden (#26a), a large enclosed rectangle with tall stone walls finished with a red terra cotta tile coping on three sides and the Conservatory on the south, is axially related to the chateau. The central garden axis, carrying from the center door of the Conservatory through the garden, its vine-clad arbor, and the main north gate linking it with The Ramble, aligns with the fountain in the center of The Esplanade where it crosses the axis carrying from the front door of the chateau east to the pergola on the Vista. As Olmsted described, the garden proper is terraced and divided in three parts by low stone retaining walls. Vehicular traffic enters the garden from the northeast corner gate and continues in an inverted L on the narrow uppermost terrace to the northwest corner and out (to the rear of the Conservatory) through a gate in the southwest corner wall. Its path and the pendant paths on the east and south sides are asphalt-paved. The foot paths under the arbor and on the terraces are either asphalt-paved or gravel. The two large terraces are further divided by a central arbor planted with grapes and ornamental vines. The plantings on these terraces have changed through the years. The upper terrace has large geometric beds, planted with annuals, flanking the pergola and flanked in their turn, by grass panels. The lower terrace has an intricate series of smaller geometric beds and is almost exclusively planted with roses. Inset at its foot, in front of the Conservatory is a half-circular garden, enclosed with an American holly hedge which gives onto the brick terrace carrying along the garden face of the Conservatory.

The appearance of the Conservatory (#26b) reflects a collaboration between the Hunt office, which prepared the plan and designed the brick and pebble-dash masonry façade overlooking the Walled Garden, and the firm of Hitchings & Co., Horticultural Architects and Builders of New York, served as consultants to the design. The firm of Lord & Burnham probably supplied the structural steel for the Conservatory and related glasshouses. The Conservatory consists of a large rectangular, principal block, whose north face is engaged with the side walls on the south side of the garden, and a trio of symmetrical glazed one-story ells on the rear, all of which stand on a brick basement. The garden façade, finished in the estate vocabulary of pebble-dash wall surfaces with brick quoins and dressings, is distinguished by a five-part arcade holding arch-headed windows and the central entrance with paired doors. Secondary entrances also open into wings at either side of the principal interior space. About 1963, a ridge-and-gutter service glasshouse (#26e) was built on the east side of the Conservatory, behind and abutting the garden wall; it is not open to view. In the restoration and renovation of the Conservatory completed in 1999, the brick terrace on the back side of the Conservatory ells was rebuilt, and much of the basement area under the ells refitted as a garden shop which also includes an adjoining outside sales yard.

The Gardener's Cottage (#26c), designed by Richard Sharp Smith for the Hunt office and completed in 1892, is the second oldest residence built on the estate for Mr. Vanderbilt, junior to the Shepherds Cottage (#98) by only a few months. The cottage and its adjoining stable are engaged with the Walled Garden and positioned just

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north of the east gate; the west elevation of the cottage is coterminous with the east wall of the Walled Garden and, originally, had direct openings into the garden that have since been screened with plantings. The one-and-a-half-story stone cottage is covered with a high hip roof of terra cotta tiles punctuated with a single hip roof dormer window on each elevation plus the aforementioned shed dormer illuminating the bathroom. An engaged entrance porch and a limestone-sheathed bay window overlook a small enclosed yard. A small service yard links the cottage with the tier of rooms forming the stable block (#26d) which is built against the southeast garden wall. Comprising spaces for tools, ashes, a buggy and cart shed, a "Boys Room" with a fireplace and recessed bed, a harness and feed room, the small stable, and manure pit, the stable and its component parts, survive with a high degree of integrity.

27. Restroom Building  
1990  
Noncontributing building

Designed and finished in the estate vocabulary, this small rectangular building has a brick base and dressings, pebble-dash elevations, and a red tile hip roof with dormer vents on its sides. A centered arched opening in the southwest front opens onto a passage with doors into the respective mens' and women's lavatories.

28. Boiler House  
ca. 1930s  
Contributing building

This small one-story brick masonry building is covered with an asphalt shingle hip roof and has an engaged chimney stack whose corbelled top repeats the like feature on the Conservatory chimney. It has a partially glazed door and a small window on its west front.

29. Pesticide House  
ca. 1970  
Noncontributing building

This rectangular two-story cement block building, inset in a low hill and erected ca. 1970, was converted ca. 1985 for the storage of pesticides and horticultural chemicals. It is covered with an asphalt shingle side-gable roof. On its south side a concrete pad and low retaining wall lead to a metal door opening into the lower level. A similar door opens at grade on the west side into the upper level.

30. Equipment Shed  
ca. 1990  
Noncontributing building

This long narrow rectangular building has a creosote pole structural frame and a sheet metal shed roof. Built for horticultural storage, it has a dirt floor, eight open bays on its front southeast side, and vertical board sheathing on the other three elevations. A locked storage shed sheathed with board and batten has been added on the southwest end.

31. Greenhouse/Cold Frame Complex  
ca. 1990-1995  
Noncontributing structure

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This horticultural service facility is dominated by two substantial rectangular metal-frame greenhouses. The first is a three-part gable roof structure, erected by the Van Wingerden Greenhouse Company of Horseshoe, North Carolina; it has a fixed roof and flexible, removable sides. The second, smaller greenhouse, was erected by Jadenloon. They are used to winter over and refresh the large potted ornamental plants used at the house and other estate buildings. A smaller unheated metal frame greenhouse, with an arched top, stands to the rear (south) of the above building.

32, 32a-b. The Bass Pond, the Spring Garden, and Azalea Garden  
1889-1940

One contributing structure, two contributing sites

As with the Estate in general, the appearance of the Bass Pond, the adjoining Azalea Garden, and the Spring Garden and related architectural and landscape features making up this part of the pleasure grounds of Biltmore Estate, reflects the collaboration of several designers. However, the genesis of the place owes to Mr. Olmsted and the first reference to its development appears in the section on the arboretum in his memorandum of 12 July 1889 to Mr. Vanderbilt:

A dam could be built on the site of the present lower dam of Four Mile Creek and ten feet higher, which would form a lake, extending up the north valley of the creek to a point a little above where the steam saw mill stood. This lake would probably be visible from the residence garden and perhaps from the terrace. In a branch of the Four Mile Valley, where there is now a vacant house a little north east of what should be the head of the lake, is probably the best place for your service gardens, propagating houses, etc.

The Bass Pond (#32), one of two important water features Olmsted created to improve the scenery on the estate, was allied with his planning for the arboretum whose circular drive was to begin here (and did) on its east side. The dam Olmsted proposed was designed by W. A. Thompson. It features a visible random stone masonry center, with curving tapering sides rising to pylons that flank the spillway, and long abutting brick side sections that were covered over with earth and planted to integrate the dam with the seemingly natural landscape. A surviving documentary photograph, dated 22 September 1893, shows the newly built dam before it was filled and the brick sides covered.

Work in this area was pushed forward in part because the Alexander brick house, then standing to the southwest, was refitted as a temporary (1892-1895) residence for Mr. Vanderbilt and his guests, and the road, then called the "South Approach Road" and subsequently known as the Glen Road, was a principal path between it and the chateau site. On 8 April 1892 Richard Sharp Smith wrote Mr. Hunt:

The bridge plans are nearly completed, and will be sent you early next week. I think a brick arch will answer, the pressure per foot is 6 tons. This should be safe for brick. As to the appearance stone would be a pleasing change.

Two drawings for same, the bridge (#6c) at the foot of The Ramble and the bridge (#6d) here carrying the Glen Road over the Bass Pond, were sent to Mr. Hunt under cover of 12 April:

You will please note Bridge No. 2 on South Approach Road is made circular in plan instead of as arranged straight. This I think will be more pleasing and will better fit the road.

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Richard Morris Hunt apparently approved the plans drawn by his associate, and by the end of the month Mr. Smith sought estimates from D.C. Weeks & Company for the construction; the company masons were then building the two brick bridges on the Service Road. The estimate for excavating and building the handsome brick bridge here was \$9,570; The Ramble bridge was estimated at \$3,582.

Some initial work began on the bridges in fall 1892; however, they were largely built in 1893. Work on other architectural features of this site were undertaken in the summer of 1895. The rustic-style bridge and boat-house (#33) at the north end of the bridge were commenced in July, and the bridge was completed by the end of the year. Stone was brought in for the parapet wall carrying alongside the head of the arboretum road in August, and its construction begun. The stone staircase, linking the glen walk and the boat house with the Glen Road, was begun in fall 1895 and completed in spring 1896. Work here was renewed at the turn of the century when the Olmsted Brothers produced a planting plan for the Glen in 1901. While the curvilinear pattern of walks and trails remain from the earlier Olmsted plan, the general appearance dates principally from the interwar period when Chauncey Beadle essentially recreated this pleasure as an Azalea Garden.

This linear series of garden and landscape features begins with the Spring Garden (#32a), an irregularly-shaped largely shrub garden to the east of the Walled Garden and at the head of the glen that gently carries on a south/southwesterly axis to the Bass Pond. Enclosed within the boundary of curvilinear paved roads, it is linked by a gravel path with The Ramble to the northwest. After circling the open sunny dale in the Spring Garden, the path crosses a road into the Azalea Garden (#32b) where it is joined by a second path from the Walled Garden, and the two wind and intertwine their way, along and across a shallow brook down to the north end of the Bass Pond. The Azalea Garden was named in honor of Chauncey Beadle and a bronze plaque dedicated on 1 April 1940, the fiftieth anniversary of his coming to the estate. Here one path diverges to the south, across a rustic bridge to the boat-house while another heads west and around the west side of the Bass Pond to the bridge across the dam. The stone staircase linking the boat house with the Glen Road, is an inverted, reverse L and comprises a single flight of six steps and five sets of three steps each, all linked by asphalt paving, up to a landing with an inset L-shaped seat overlooking the pond, and a final trio of steps up to the road.

The brick bridge (#6d) carrying the Glen Road across Four Mile Branch is a simple elegant structure curved to fit the road, with a wide arched span above the water course; it is built of bricks supplied by the estate brick works. Paired pedestrian overlooks are inset in its walls on either side and above the shallow projecting piers that relieve and buttress the sides. The tops of its side walls are elegantly coped with estate-made brick with a Tudor-arch profile. At the north end of the bridge a gravel lane leads off to the east, along the impounded course of Four Mile Branch. This now unprepossessing lane, built as the head of the proposed arboretum road, is lined on the south by a low stone retaining wall. John Charles Olmsted photographed the scene, capturing the road, its wall, the Bass Pond, and the bridge in a very open setting on a visit to the estate on 25 March 1896. The waterworks controlling the level of the pond is located on Four Mile Branch, off the south side of the road, and marked by a brick wall with an inset arch, replicating the span of the bridge, above the water course. Further east on the lane, near its junction with Overlook Road, the former arboretum road crosses a feeder into the creek. The brick sub-structure of a bridge (#6ii) here, together with the short stretch of gravel lane, and the stone retaining wall are the chief physical reminders of Frederick Law Olmsted's dream for the Arboretum, which he saw as a valuable long drive opening up removed parts of the estate for the pleasure of Mr. Vanderbilt and his guests and the public for whom he anticipated its valuable instruction. The final feature at the Bass Pond is the stone dam, completed in the summer of 1893 of quarry-faced random stone masonry. A rustic style bridge was built across the spillway in the 1890s and has been replaced over the years. The current bridge with a sawn-timber base has limb and twig railings.



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- 33-33a. Boat-House and Foot Bridge  
 1895; repaired when necessary in the twentieth century  
 Two contributing structures

This construction of the first boat-house here in the water's edge at the north end of the Bass Pond is recorded in the collected "Reports of Landscape Gardener" which James Gall, Jr., commenced with the week ending 12 July 1890. For the week ending 20 July 1895, Gall reported work begun on the bridge and boat-house at the north end of the lake. Work on both features continued through the fall, and on 28 December Mr. Gall reported the completion of the bridge. Presumably the boat-house had been completed as well. The boat-house is a rustic-style pavilion standing on brick piers with L-shaped twig lattice piers supporting a wood shingle hip roof. An open deck on the pond side gives onto steps down to a lower landing accessible to the two boat slips. The foot bridge (#33a) has a wood deck and limb-and-twig railings with insets to accommodate a bench on each side.

- 34. Halfway Barn  
 ca. 1975  
 Noncontributing building

This small rectangular frame barn, standing on a cement block foundation, sheathed with vertical board siding, and covered with an asphalt-shingle gambrel roof was built by Don Burleson, general manager of Biltmore Estate in the 1970s, as a stable for his horses. Its six stalls, opening on the side walls, are fitted with two-part doors with diagonal braces. A large opening on the west gambrel end, providing access to the loft, is fitted with like paired doors. A small board-and-batten sheathed shed addition on the east end contains the necessary feed room.

- 35. French Broad Farm  
 ca. 1924-1950  
 Contributing site

Although the present appearance of French Broad Farm largely dates to the rebuilding of the dairying operations in the late 1930s by Mr. Adams, this place is the site of one of the oldest farm operations on the estate retained by Mr. Vanderbilt and remains in existence today. It is one of four farms, together with the Sheep Farm, Plateau Farm, and Ferry Farm, which appear on the "Guide Map to Biltmore Estate" prepared in 1896 by Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot. Including fertile bottom lands on the east side of the French Broad River connecting with those associated with Benjamin Julius Alexander's farm, the French Broad Farm probably included some substantial buildings; however, the appearance of any here, prior to ca. 1924 is not known at present. In the 1930s, during the expansion of the dairying operations on the Estate, Mr. Adams undertook improvements here erecting the main barn (#36) in 1938, its milk house, the small barn (#37), and the stable (#38).

- 36. Main Barn (with attached milk house)  
 1938  
 Contributing building

The large (36' by 120') frame gambrel-roof barn, with an attached, contemporary milk house on its north side and later cement block feed room on the south, dates to the expansion and rebuilding of the estate dairy farm operations in the 1930s. Its construction in 1938 is documented through the order for stalls, stanchions, and other equipment placed on 5 July 1938 to the Loudon Machinery Company, Fairfield, Iowa. In appearance it is

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similar to several other barns of this period on the estate. Rectangular in plan, it stands on a poured concrete foundation, is sheathed with board and batten, and is covered with a sheet metal roof. On the gable ends, the center stall-level openings are protected by sliding board-and-rail doors. Symmetrical openings to either side, above the center doors, and along each side elevation are protected with board-and-rail blinds. A large opening in the south (front) gable end allowed for the unloading of hay into the loft area. The sheathed interior of the barn remains intact except for the removal of the milking stanchions and dairy equipment; some two dozen stalls for horses have been built along its center passage. A contemporary drawing for the small rectangular one-story board-and-batten sheathed milk room survives, with the monogram "JGA." Its original plan and finish remain essentially intact. A small prefabricated gambrel roof service building has been added at the west end of the milk room.

37. Small Barn  
Between ca. 1924 and 1938  
Contributing building

This rectangular building, smaller by a half than the main barn, stands on a poured-in frame concrete foundation and is covered by a front-gable sheet-metal roof. The lower part of the elevations, enclosing the stable level, are sheathed with original novelty weatherboarding on the north and east sides and replacement vertical boards on the south and west sides. The upper elevations are sheathed with wood shingles. Sliding wood doors protect the center entrance on each gable end while the seven symmetrical openings on each long side are fitted with board-and-rail blinds. A small simple enclosed shed has been added on the rear elevation. The flush, horizontal sheathed interior follows a center passage plan with five stalls on the south, and four stalls and a feed room on the north. The use and survival of the weatherboard siding, wood shingles, and a four-panel wood door in the east loft opening similar to dairy buildings at Plateau and Inanda farms and atypical of the 1930s-era expansion, suggest the possibility that this building may date to some improvements in agricultural operations undertaken in the 1920s.

38. Stable  
ca. 1938  
Contributing building

This small rectangular frame building stands on a poured concrete foundation, is sheathed with vertical board siding, and is covered with a sheet metal gable front roof. Board-and-rail doors open into two stalls in the main block and a third stall in a shed addition. A ladder on the front provides access to the loft.

39. Farm Residence  
ca. 1955-1965  
Noncontributing building

This rectangular frame one-story house, with projecting porches on its front and rear elevations, stands on a cement block foundation and is covered with an asphalt shingle side-gable roof. The house's only visual interest derives from the use of horizontal sawn slab siding, a nod to the rustic in the 1950s and early 1960s. Its appearance reflects alterations for successive occupants.

40. Indoor Ring  
ca. 1980  
Noncontributing building

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Standing on a low cement block foundation this large rectangular frame building is sheathed with board-and-batten siding and is covered by a gable roof. Center openings in each gable end are protected by sliding doors. The interior is unfinished and has a dirt floor. This is the only building at the site erected specifically for equestrian use.

41. Trout Pond Complex  
ca. 1900-1905  
Noncontributing site

According to estate tradition, Carl Alwin Schenck created a group of trout ponds here at the turn of the century on a small branch feeding to the west into the French Broad River. Long abandoned and said to have been damaged in a flood, the site is marked by one obvious depression retained by stone walling, and two additional stretches of stonework that appear to have retained other ponds in a series along the branch.

42. River Cliff Cottage Site  
1892; lost ca. 1900-1925  
Noncontributing site

The construction of River Cliff Cottage in 1892 coincided with the building of the Shepherd's Cottage, the Gardener's Cottage, and the remodeling of the Alexander brick house for occupation by Mr. Vanderbilt. Its location on a shallow, probably man-made, terrace on the hillside, overlooking a ninety-degree bend in the French Broad River, and with a view upriver to the west, was no doubt proposed by Frederick Law Olmsted. River Cliff Cottage was built as a guest house on the estate and it served that purpose into the winter of 1895 when Biltmore House was opened. While some references to this use exist in written and photographic form, it is best known as a cottage occupied (at times) by Frederick Law Olmsted and his wife on visits to the estate from its completion in 1892 until mid-1895.

On 28 March 1892 Richard Sharp Smith wrote Mr. McNamee enclosing a "sketch for Veranda for Brick house and blue print of plans for River Cliff Cottage." Its construction advanced quickly. Bricks for the foundation were ordered in April and by 8 July W.E. Wolfe was paid for either plastering or rough coat work on the cottage. Later in the summer Mr. Smith was inquiring about paint colors to be used in the cottage. One of the last references to its finish appears in a letter of 21 December 1892, from Mr. Smith to Mr. McNamee: "The work at the River Cliff House will be pushed forward as rapidly as possible." Whether River Cliff Cottage and its outbuildings burned or were pulled down, is unknown. The site continues to be marked by a depression probably occupied by the cellar furnace room, and sections of brickwork, some with rough cast. The brick produced by the estate brick works are stamped "Biltmore."

43. Carpenter Shop  
ca. 1988  
Noncontributing building

This multi-purpose metal-sheathed, one-story service building stands on a concrete pad and block foundation and is rectangular in form with a shed on its northeast side sheltering a loading dock and an inset outdoor work area in its north rear corner. The interior has areas partitioned for use by the furniture conservation staff, the construction services crew, and the floral department.

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44. Garage  
ca. 1965  
Noncontributing building

This simple rectangular building is one of nine service and warehousing buildings (#44-#52) which stand in an informal arrangement in a work area in the woodland off the Service Road. Covered with a sheet-metal shed roof, its elevations, with four bays on the front, are sheathed with a combination of sheet metal, wood, and fiberglass which reflect changing uses of the building.

45. Roads/Grounds Maintenance Equipment Shed  
ca. 1985  
Noncontributing building

This rectangular frame shed, covered with a sheet-metal roof and sheathed on its rear and sides with unpainted board and batten, is used for the storage of field and maintenance vehicles. It comprises nine open-front bays with a tool and storage room enclosed at its west end.

46. Small Equipment Shed  
ca. 1990-1992  
Noncontributing building

Standing perpendicular to the above building, this small three-bay frame shed is also used for service vehicles. It has a concrete pad floor, vertical board sheathed side and rear elevations, and a sheet-metal shed roof.

47. Wood Shed  
ca. 1991-1992  
Noncontributing building

This rectangular board-and-batten sheathed frame building is covered with a sheet metal shed roof. It has an open two-bay front, blind sides, and a large bay-width opening on the rear protected by a sliding board-and-batten door. It is used primarily to supply wood for the grills and ovens in the estate restaurants.

48. Landscape Trailer  
ca. 1996  
Noncontributing building

This one-story prefabricated double-wide trailer houses offices and a break room used by landscaping crews on the estate.

49. Forestry Shop and Office  
ca. 1990  
Noncontributing building

This three-part rectangular frame building, covered with board and batten, has a sheet-metal shed roof. The southwest third is enclosed as office and indoor work space, the center block is a three-bay open front garage, and the northeast end, two bays wide and projecting forward, is used to shelter larger equipment.

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- 50. Central Warehouse  
ca. 1990-1995  
Noncontributing building

This large conventional metal-sheathed building, standing on a concrete pad, is used for the warehousing and distribution of merchandise sold or consumed on the estate. It is fitted with a loading dock and garage opening.

- 51. Fertilizer Shed  
ca. 1995  
Noncontributing building

This small rectangular frame building is sheathed with unpainted board and batten and covered with a sheet-metal shed roof. Standing on a concrete pad, it has two open-front bays on its west front and is used for the storage of fertilizer and gardening supplies.

- 52. Fuel House and Tanks  
ca. 1992  
Noncontributing structure

This property comprises two large metal gasoline and diesel fuel tanks, standing on a concrete pad, and a small board-and-batten-sheathed shed-roof fuel house.

- 53. East Side Ranger's House  
1981-1982  
Noncontributing building

The design of this handsome Rustic-style one-story log residence by Padgett & Freeman of Asheville is based on Mr. Vanderbilt's Buckspring Lodge in Pisgah Forest. The full set of surviving plans is dated 22 September 1981, and construction started soon thereafter. Generally rectangular in plan, set on a stone foundation with inset mortared joints, and covered with a wood shingle roof, the house is distinguished by a five-sided porch at its south end which enjoys splendid views over the rolling terrain dropping down, south to the French Broad River. Its log elevations are enhanced by the porch's bark-covered timber and twig supports and railing. The house was expanded by a one-and-a-half story frame addition to the east, sheathed with wood shingles and connected by a hyphen to the log block.

- 54. Garage  
ca. 1990  
Noncontributing building

This three-bay rectangular Rustic-style frame building is covered by a gable roof. The enclosed south bay is sheathed with manufactured round-log siding and has a poured concrete floor while the center and north automobile bays have a gravel floor and bark-covered locust uprights.

- 55. Calf and Test Barn Complex (former)  
ca. 1900; 1930s  
Contributing site

Sharing honors with the former Dairy Barn and Buildings (#78), the brick and frame buildings here mark one of the two most important sites on the estate associated with the Biltmore Dairy Farms and reflect two important

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periods in the development of the estate's Jersey herd. Although no buildings of note appear here on the 1896 estate plan, within a few years this area became the site of the brick mule barn (#56) erected in 1900 that was later, better known as a nursery for newborn calves. Its use as the center for raising calves continued into the 1930s and afterward. In 1938 this area became the major site of the dairy-herd building program by Mr. Adams. He oversaw the erection of a complex of exceptionally well-developed frame calf and maternity barns, a number designed by Anthony Lord that became the pride of the estate and attracted national attention. The Biltmore Estate Archives contain photographs of the complex and views of the interiors showing the highly finished pine stalls, together with letters from dairymen throughout the country requesting copies of the barn plans. In 1941 the sales pavilion was erected here as a shelter for the auction sale of heifers and bulls bred on the estate. The area is also the location of two surviving 1930s residences erected for workers in the calf barns. Having experienced declining use in the 1970s, the brick barn was renovated and enlarged and in 1979 became the site of the Deerpark Restaurant, the first commercial restaurant for guests on the estate. Although the complex of maternity and calf barns and related facilities, totaling a near dozen variously-sized buildings were pulled down ca. 1990, two frame barns, the sales pavilion, and two residences and garages, together with the turn of the century brick barn and adjoining fenced pastures to the north, survive and represent the history of the site in the history of Biltmore Dairy Farms.

56. Mule/Calf Barn (now Deerpark Restaurant)  
ca. 1900; renovated and enlarged, 1978-1979  
Contributing building

The present appearance of this building dates to two construction efforts: the intact rectangular block at the front was erected as a mule barn ca. 1900 to plans prepared by Richard Sharp Smith and dated December 1899; in 1978-1979 it was remodeled and expanded with a major block to the southeast, rear for use as the Deerpark Restaurant. The design of the mule barn, which later became better-known as a calf barn, reflects the continued use of the estate vocabulary in its masonry construction, brick perimeter base, quoins, and dressings, rough coat elevations, and dark brown painted woodwork. The façade, facing northwest, is centered by a projecting pavilion with an arched, brick-framed opening. The walls to either side have tall brick paneled aprons, reflecting the height of the interior stalls, with single and paired six-over-six sash windows above.

Symmetrically placed eyelids enframe paired nine-over-nine sash windows on the main elevation and flanking projecting blocks. The gable ends continue this general treatment with painted beams framing panels of rough coat stucco. The arched opening gives into a lobby with a large dining area to the northeast and the kitchen in the space to the southwest. Doors at the back of the lobby lead into the large, restaurant addition designed by Padgett & Freeman. Of wood and masonry construction and covered with an expansive hip roof, it is essentially square in plan with the four-sided dining area surrounding an open courtyard in the center. A storage building, outdoor freezers, and other kitchen facilities are contained in a fenced service area off the southwest side of the addition. Although the sympathetic addition of kitchen and dining facilities nearly doubled the size of the building during its adaptive-reuse refitting, the ca. 1900 front block of the barn was restored and preserved, and it retains its critical importance as one of the oldest agricultural outbuildings on the estate.

57. Restroom Building  
ca. 1965  
Noncontributing building

This small rectangular one-story cement-block building has stucco elevations, enhanced with brown painted decorative boards, and a wood shingle hip roof. Doors on three of its elevations provide access to the men's and women's restrooms and a service room.

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58. Sales Pavilion  
1941  
Contributing structure

Designed in 1941 by Asheville architect Anthony Lord (1900-1993), this sixteen sided wood pavilion was erected for auctions of Jersey heifers and bulls bred on Biltmore Estate. Completed at the beginning of the war, it did not shelter auctions until the spring of 1949 when the first of a series of annual auctions was held here. After the auctions ended, the building came to be used as a general shelter and finally for picnicking by groups visiting the estate. The building has a poured concrete floor. Tree lengths are used as uprights to impart a rustic character, and they rise to the sawn wood frame umbrella-like roof which terminates with an octagonal louvered cupola and finial.

59. Barn  
ca. 1938-1940  
Contributing building

This large gambrel-roof frame barn, similar in appearance to others erected in the expansion and rebuilding program undertaken by Mr. Adams in the late 1930s, stands on a poured concrete foundation, has symmetrical board-and-batten sheathed elevations, and is covered with a painted sheet tin roof. Rectangular in plan, the barn has ground level openings in the center of its gambrel ends that open onto the center passage and are protected by sliding wood doors. On the northwest end, this opening is flanked by windows; an opening above it, also fitted with a sliding door, provides access to the loft level while a larger opening at the top of the elevation, fitted with paired side-hinged doors, enabled the unloading of hay with a ridge-mounted forklift. In the opposite southeast end there is a pendant opening with a sliding door above the ground level entrance; the upper gambrel end is fitted with a deep horizontal louver for ventilation. The fifteen-bay northeast and southwest elevations have center doors flanked by openings with nine-pane windows. The sheathed interior of the barn remains largely intact and is now used for food service offices and storage.

60. Hay Barn  
ca. 1938-1940  
Contributing building

Probably contemporary in date with the above barn, this building was built for the storage of hay and straw used in the calf barns. The rectangular building stands on a poured concrete foundation and is covered with a sheet-metal gambrel roof. The elevations have a symmetrical finish but are different in appearance. The front and side elevations are sheathed with spaced vertical boards while the rear (southwest) gambrel end has spaced horizontal boards providing ventilation. Openings occur at ground level on both gambrel ends while a large opening in the top of the northeast end allows for unloading hay with a ridge-mounted forklift. The side elevations are six bays wide with cut-out openings on the northwest and like-shaped full-width openings on the southeast side.

61. Dairy Worker's Cottage I  
ca. 1938-1940  
Contributing building

This cottage is one of two surviving residences erected here for workers in the calf barns. The small one-story rectangular two-bedroom dwelling stands on a cement-block foundation, is sheathed in board and batten with weatherboarded gable ends, and covered with an asphalt-shingle side gable roof. It is painted brown with white

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trim. A gable-roof porch, supported by square piers with a railing, stands on the east front elevation while a wing is enclosed on the north gable end. Single and paired window openings hold six-over-six sash.

- 62. Garage  
ca. 1938-1940  
Contributing building

This rectangular frame building has a dirt floor, board-and-batten elevations, and a sheet tin gable-front roof. The side-hinged doors on its north gable end are lost.

- 63. Dairy Worker's Cottage II  
ca. 1938-1940  
Contributing building

Similar in appearance to the above cottage and probably contemporary with it, this small one-story two-bedroom cottage stands on a cement block foundation, is covered with board and batten with weatherboarded gable ends, and is covered with an asphalt-shingle side-gable roof. It, too, is painted brown with white trim and its window openings hold six-over-six sash. The northeast façade has a gable-front porch while a shallow ell stands on the rear elevation and a small wing is offset on the northwest gable end.

- 64. Garage  
ca. 1938-1940  
Contributing building

Partially inset into grade, the garage stands on a cement block foundation and is sheathed with board and batten; a large opening occupies the gable front, and the building is covered with a sheet-metal gable roof.

- 65. Veterinarian's Cottage  
1946-1947  
Contributing building

Designed by Anthony Lord in 1945, this one-and-a-half-story frame cottage was erected as a residence for the farm veterinarian, and it was occupied in the late spring of 1947 by Dr. Arthur B. Christian. The construction of the house at the end of World War II is well-documented in the Biltmore Estate Archives in a series of letters and applications seeking permission from the Federal Housing Administration to erect the house for occupation by Dr. Christian, a veteran and former member of the Army Veterinary Corps. The rectangular frame house stands on a poured concrete foundation and is sheathed with board and batten with weatherboarding in the gable ends. The house's side-gable roof engages a full-façade porch supported by square piers with a railing. Painted brown with white trim, the house has six-over-six sash and an attractive entrance with a partially glazed door, sidelights, and a three-part transom. A dormer on the rear elevation provides for a second story bathroom, a departure from similar houses erected on the estate.

- 66. Garage  
ca. 1960  
Noncontributing building

This simple rectangular wood frame building is sheathed with vertical boards and covered with a gable-front sheet tin roof.



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67. Ridge Road Barn  
ca. 1970  
Noncontributing building

This rectangular barn, with creosote pole structural members, is sheathed with unpainted board and batten and covered with an asphalt-shingle gable-front roof. A sliding door on the front provides access to the stable level while paired board and rail doors above open into the loft. On the side the stable area opens into a fenced feeding lot.

68. Sleepy Hollow Barn  
1942  
Contributing building

The construction of this barn is documented in a letter of 5 January 1943 to Mr. Mitchell, the farm manager, in which George M. Wallis, the farm director, discussed the accomplishments of 1942, "We purchased and ran our new saw mill, getting out the lumber for two houses and for the new Sleepy Hollow Barn which is the finest barn of its kind ever built in this section." The gable-roof form of this rectangular barn represents a change from the gambrel-roof barns seen elsewhere on the estate and, so, too, does its unusual depth. The south front elevation presents a conventional appearance with a large centered opening giving onto the center-passage plan; paired sliding doors protect the opening which is flanked by small square windows holding top-hinged nine-pane sash. The large opening above, rising from the floor of the loft to the ridge line of the roof, is protected by paired doors filling about two-thirds of the height. The roof, supported by brackets, projects in front of the elevation to cover the hay lift. The long east and west side elevations have a symmetrical arrangement of openings, fitted with nine-pane windows, wall dormers whose faces contain entrances on the stable level onto cross passages, and openings at loft level fitted with paired board-and-rail doors. Horizontal slatted vents carry at the top of the elevations under the eaves. The finish of the barn's rear elevation includes a smaller centered opening onto the loft, and an open vent in the upper gable end. The interior of the barn retains its original finish including a poured concrete floor, stucco walls to half height with flush sheathing above, a sheathed ceiling, and much of the equipment installed when this was a milking barn. (The milk house on the east side of the barn, seen in documentary photographs, is lost.) The barn is now used for the estate sheep operations.

- 69-69a Silos  
ca. 1942; ca. 1950-1960  
One contributing structure, one noncontributing structure

The trio of silos standing on the west side of the Sleepy Hollow Barn include a pair comprising two of the four oldest silos remaining on the estate; the other two being the silo at the Sheep Barn (#97) and the brick tile silo (#108) at Plateau Farm. (A similar pair of now lost glazed brick silos stood at the main Dairy Barn (#78); documentary photographs show that they, too, were covered with a wood roof structure similar to the one surviving there.)

Built of twelve-inch square glazed terra cotta bricks, the paired silos are of equal height, joined in the center, fitted with openings for worker access, and exterior metal rungs. The base of the southernmost silo was long ago repaired and rebuilt with yellow brick after the silage over-fermented and caused an explosion. The pair is fitted with a frame gable-roof structure, sheathed with board and batten. The silo (#69a) standing to the north is of conventional mid-twentieth century design, and built of pre-cast cement tiles mortared and held in place by metal rings whose spacing widens from the bottom to top as the pressure on the structure's wall diminishes. It is

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fitted with an engaged tower that protects the tiered, graduated openings into the silo. It does not have a roof or cover.

70. Sleepy Hollow Shed  
ca. 1970; partially rebuilt ca. 1992  
Noncontributing building

The present appearance of this long rectangular one-story gable-roof frame barn reflects two periods of construction. The original block, comprising the center and south end, stands on a poured concrete foundation and is sheathed with board and batten which rises to horizontal openings for ventilation under the eaves. It has a conventional door, protected by a porch on the west side, an opening for cattle, fitted with sliding doors, centered in the south end, and a feeding trough engaged with the east wall. The barn's north end, rebuilt after a tree fell on it, stands on a high concrete block foundation wall with board-and-batten sheathing to the horizontal openings under the eaves.

71. Farm Cottage  
ca. 1930  
Contributing building

The plans for this Colonial Revival-style house, dated August 1930 and drawn by Asheville architect Charles N. Parker, mark it as one of the first buildings erected on the estate under the direction of Junius G. Adams who would become president of The Biltmore Company in 1932 and effectively presided over the estate, including the expansion of the dairy operations in the 1930s and 1940s, until his death in 1962. Mr. Parker (188?-1961) had designed Mr. Adams' house in Biltmore Forest in 1921, and this is one of the few known commissions he enjoyed at Biltmore. As built, the house represents a reverse of Mr. Parker's plan, the introduction of a two-story gable-front entrance bay on the façade, and the addition of an offset one-and-a-half story wing on the north gable end. The one-and-a-half story frame house stands on a brick foundation, is sheathed with wood shingles, and covered with a metal shingle roof; the shingles are painted brown, the woodwork white, and the windows fitted with six-over-six sash. On the façade the two-story entrance bay is flanked on the south by a two-bay arcaded porch, with a dormer above, and on the north by a paired window in the main block, and a dormer window; the offset wing is one bay wide and one bay deep. The rear four-bay rear elevation of the main block is the exact reverse of Parker's proposal with a shed porch protecting the kitchen entrance and a shed dormer above. The interior of the house, including three bedrooms and a bath on the second story, has good, typical Colonial Revival finish. It is now an employee residence.

72. Garage  
ca. 1930  
Contributing building

Partially inset in the bank behind the house, the garage has a poured in form concrete foundation whose height descends, back to front, with the grade. The frame upper section of the gable front building is covered with brown painted wood shingles. It has an asphalt shingle roof.

73. Berkshire House  
Late-nineteenth century; drastically remodeled and rebuilt 1984-1985  
Noncontributing building

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Although not identified by name, a house at this site appears on the 1896 "Guide Map of Biltmore Estate"; however, the appearance of the present house dates from a dramatic renovation and remodeling of the house in 1984-1985 that effectively resulted in a new dwelling. The essentially rectangular two-story house, standing on a brick foundation, is finished with rough coat stucco, and covered with a gable-on-hip roof. All visible interior and exterior fabric dates to the 1980s project. The renovation was effected for occupation by an estate employee.

74. Garage  
ca. 1960-1970  
Noncontributing building

This two-bay enclosed garage with attached shop was built by estate employee Bill Allen who occupied Berkshire House into the early 1980s. The rectangular frame building is sheathed with painted board and batten and covered with a sheet-tin shed roof.

- 74a. Pump House  
ca. 1970  
Noncontributing building

This small, square one-story masonry building has stucco elevations and an asphalt-shingle hip roof with a cupola ventilator.

75. Farm Garage  
ca. 1934  
Contributing building

The surviving blueprints for this building by Anthony Lord, dated October 1934, record what is believed to be the earliest of several buildings he designed for Biltmore Dairy Farms. The large rectangular masonry building repeats the estate vocabulary with its brick perimeter apron, rough coat stucco walls, brown-painted bracketed eaves and finish woodwork. The gable-front building, covered with a standing seam metal roof, is essentially utilitarian in appearance and was erected for use as a garage to service the farm and dairy vehicles used by the estate company and Biltmore Dairy Farms. The northwest façade is six bays wide, with paired doors flanking two windows in the front office area, a large multi-pane metal window to the west, and the former blacksmith shop in its north corner. The side elevations are generally symmetrical in appearance with shallow gable-front projecting bays toward the front and two additional garage bays, on axis with each other, in the main body of the workshop. The symmetrical five-bay rear elevation has a center garage opening flanked by smallish windows that, in turn, are flanked by large forty-pane metal windows in the outer bays. The garage openings are fitted with overhead doors. The interior of the building has a simple utilitarian finish with offices at the front, storage rooms for parts, equipment, oil, rest and break rooms, etc., in the front third, a smallish garage in the front center, and the large work and service space in the rear two-thirds of the building that is illuminated by multi-pane metal windows and skylights.

76. Farm Equipment Shed  
ca. 1985  
Noncontributing building

This large rectangular frame shed stands parallel with the northeast wall of the farm garage (#75) and is partially inset into grade along its long northeast rear wall that stands on a cement block retaining

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wall/foundation. The side-gable roof building has a gravel floor, brown-painted board-and-batten sheathed walls, and a sheet tin roof. The southwest front is entirely open and divided into twelve bays for the storage of farm equipment. Later, a five-bay addition was erected on an angle off the south corner of the building. It has creosote pole supports, board-and-batten elevations, and a sheet metal shed roof.

77. Farm Warehouse  
ca. 1935  
Contributing building

This substantial T-plan frame building, standing on a poured-in-form concrete foundation, sheathed with brown-stained board and batten, and covered with a sheet-metal gable roof, was erected as a warehouse for seeds, fertilizer, parts, equipment, and other materials required for farm use. Most of its doors and six-pane top-hinged windows remain in place; however, the large opening in the southeast end of the stem has been refitted with a replacement overhead door. The simple, functional exterior appearance of the building is unprepossessing; however, its interior spaces, fitted up with long rows of unpainted pine shelving, bins, and other storage compartments, now mellowed to a rich golden brown, convey a strong, evocative impression of farm operations in an earlier, simpler day and on a decidedly different and more intimate scale.

78. (former) Dairy Barn and Buildings (now Winery)  
1900-1902; remodeled, expanded, and overbuilt, 1984-1985  
Noncontributing building

After Biltmore House, the Dairy Barn and Buildings was the largest building complex erected on Biltmore Estate, a fact that emphasizes the importance of the Jersey Dairy Herd in the agricultural life of the estate and the investment in its operations. A series of architectural drawings and prints for the buildings survive and most are dated to the spring and summer of 1900 when the design of the building and its detailing were completed by Richard Howland Hunt. On 10 February 1900, in a letter to Mr. Hunt, Richard Sharp Smith accepted Mr. Hunt's offer, and he agreed to undertake the supervision of its construction; work began the following summer. Mr. Smith submitted his first report to Mr. Hunt on excavation and foundation work at the site on 27 August 1900, and reports following thereafter, generally on two-week intervals; by the tenth of December, \$15,000 had been expended on construction. Work appears to have slowed in the summer of 1901, but it continued through 1901 and into early 1902. On 18 April 1902, Mr. Smith wrote to Mr. Hunt, "I am glad to be able to report the completion of the New Dairy and Dairy Barn Building on the Biltmore Estate."

A group of surviving aerial photographs of the complex from the early twentieth century show it to be a large and complicated series of masonry buildings, highly functional, ordered, and symmetrical in their arrangement, but with no apparent "front" in conventional terms; what is essentially the "side" of the building faces Wendover Road. In sum, however, the complex had two principal parts: the dairy; and three connected milking barns. The dairy was a long, tall rectangular building covered with a hipped roof, and with shed roof extensions on its southeast and northwest ends. The "front" of this block faced southwest and was dominated by a tall multi-stage bell-cast roof clock tower ornamented with gable-roof wall dormers and other decorative flourishes. Centered on axis with it was the middle of three large milking barns that were positioned perpendicular to the dairy's southwest face and covered with hip roofs crowned with hip-roof clerestories for light and ventilation. These three barns enjoyed a series of linkages and wings, and the site included fenced holding pens for the cows and smaller ancillary buildings. In time the Dairy Barn and Buildings complex was expanded by the construction of a fourth milking barn, a pair of glazed brick silos, and other structures that are all now lost. The creamery and related buildings stood on the east side of Wendover Road in the area that is now the location of present-day Wendover Road and parking lots.

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This complex of buildings was the principal site of the estate's dairy operations into the 1930s, when Mr. Adams undertook the construction of a series of individual milking barns on the estate's several farms, and it remained a central part of the dairy until 1957 when the main creamery and milk processing operations were moved off the home estate and to a new plant at its edge on Hendersonville Road.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s plans were developed to adapt, remake, and enlarge this complex as the Biltmore Estate Winery. In this process the creamery and milk processing plants were pulled down as were virtually all of the post-1902 buildings, structures, and other improvements. The core buildings in the complex designed by Richard Howland Hunt remained in use as the centerpiece of the winery complex, an extraordinary instance of adaptive reuse; however, the extensive refitting, remodeling, and expansive new construction for wine production have effectively altered the original character of the complex and its appearance today reflects the renovations of the 1980s and later work. In 1985 the Winery was opened to the public for tours, and today it comprises a highly valuable and profitable part of The Biltmore Company.

79. Bistro Restaurant  
1994-1995  
Noncontributing building

The tremendous response to the Winery tours prompted the construction of this third major restaurant on the estate and it was opened in 1995. The design of the building is sympathetic with the new construction at the Winery and references the earlier estate vocabulary in its use of a high brick foundation, stucco elevations, and heavily bracketed and brown-painted eaves and woodwork. The substantial one-story basement building is covered with a wood-shingle hip roof. The dining room and kitchens are on the main level with storage and warehousing in the basement accessible on the rear.

80. Restroom Building  
ca. 1985  
Noncontributing building

The renovation of the winery prompted the construction of this small one-story building. Rectangular in plan, the well-detailed building has a brick perimeter skirt, stucco elevations, and bracketed eaves under a hip roof. It contains modern restroom facilities for men and women.

81. Horse Barn and Stable  
1900-1902  
Contributing building

The Horse Barn and Stable is the second important agricultural building designed by Richard Howland Hunt for Mr. Vanderbilt in 1900, and it stands remarkably intact to the present as one of a small number of very important farm buildings on Biltmore Estate erected during Mr. Vanderbilt's life. Construction of the building, supervised by Richard Sharp Smith, did not begin until summer 1901, and on 7 September Mr. Smith reported to the architect that the foundations were completed; its erection appears to have proceeded smoothly and it was probably completed in 1902 when the dairy was placed in service.

The Horse Barn and Stable, a masonry building now covered with a sheet metal hip roof, follows the estate vocabulary established with the Conservatory and related Walled Garden buildings. Standing on a low, barely visible stone foundation, its elevations comprise a low brick perimeter apron finished with paired, but unequal string courses, elevations of rough coat stucco on wood framing, chamfered supports with bracing, and

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handsome, heavily bracketed eaves on the stable block. The complex building is actually two separate buildings that in plan form a nearly equilateral octagon whose walls enclose a large service courtyard, whose sides are enclosed except for uncovered passages in the center of its northwest and southeast sides. The "barn" portion is a tall rectangular three-level block that is effectively the back of the building and occupies the northeast length of the octagon; its ground level is a mostly open, pier-supported covered work area while the middle level, containing the loft and feed room, etc., is illuminated by paired windows and wall dormers. Doorways at the back of the "barn" open on its ends onto bridges served by earth ramps which enabled wagons to be pulled into the barn's main level for unloading. The third level is a large loft. The "stable" is actually a wide ell that projects to the southwest from the face of the "barn" and into the center of the courtyard where its many two-part stall doors and windows are protected by wide bracketed eaves that also cover brick paving immediately around the stable. Seven symmetrically-positioned dormer windows also vent and illuminate the stable that is a large single interior space, flushed sheathed, and still retaining sections of its stall partitions despite the fact that horses long ago ceased to be stabled here and the building has been used for agricultural storage and related uses for the last half-century. The north and east sides of the octagon are relatively shallow one-story pier-supported sheltered work areas, covered by gable roofs (of unequal planes), with blind backs and fronts fully opening onto the courtyard. These terminate with open pavilions in the southeast and northwest sides of the octagon. A narrow, uncovered passage separates them from like pavilions which are attached to the south and west sides of the secondary block of the Horse Barn and Stable anchored by a one-story with loft building comprising the southwest side of the octagon and the pendant block to the main barn. This building is entirely enclosed and contained tack and equipment rooms, a carriage or wagon shed, and apparently some residential quarters for hostlers; its original plastered and flush-sheathed spaces have since been largely thrown into one multi-purpose work area.

A "Planting Plan for Horse Stables" and the workers' residences in the immediate vicinity, dated 24 December 1900 and prepared by the Olmsted Brothers, survives in the Biltmore Estate Archives. All of these related houses, seen on the plan and recorded in documentary photographs, have been lost except for Line Houses I and II (#82-83) and a cottage (#87).

82. Line House I  
1900  
Contributing building

This house and the adjacent dwelling (#83) are two of eight identical "Line Houses" which were built in a line on the north edge of the bottom and facing south to the French Broad River. They were built to surviving plans labeled "Cottage: Farm Department," prepared by Richard Sharp Smith and dated June 1900, and provided comfortable three-bedroom residences, with living room and kitchen, for workers in the dairy department. In December 1900, when the Olmsted Brothers prepared the planting plan for the stables and this area, this house, together with #83, were two of five which had been built or were planned. Numerous documentary photographs show all eight in a row here, and they stood together until the 1960s when demolition began, lessening their number.

The one-and-a-half story frame house stands on a brick foundation, is finished with rough coat stucco on wood framing, and covered with an asphalt shingle hip roof which rises to a brick chimney in the center of the dwelling. Rectangular in plan, it has a shallow porch inset in its southeast front corner which shelters doors into the living room and first-story bedroom. The window openings originally contained six-over-six or eight-over-eight sash that have been replaced with one-over-one sash. The house has a two-bay hip-roof dormer above the façade, single bay shed-roof dormers on its east and west sides, and a wall dormer on the rear elevation which illuminates the staircase in the rear, center of the house. Except for the simply-detailed staircase, the interior

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finish has been replaced with modern materials. The ingenuous design of the cottage allowed the first-story front bedroom, accessible only from the front porch, to be used either by a single man if the cottage family required only two bedrooms, or by the family, if large and three bedrooms were necessary.

83. Line House II  
1900  
Contributing building

The description for Line House I (#82) appertains to this house. The only significant difference in their appearance is the recent addition of a small one-story frame ell on the west side that is finished with low-cost exterior sheathing.

84. Incubator House  
1896-1897  
Contributing building

This imposing four-part building, designed by Richard Howland Hunt in 1896, is the only surviving structure associated with the once-extensive poultry operations on the estate that are recorded in documentary photographs, plans for various components, and references in the estate correspondence files. Perhaps the most comprehensive account of the construction of the facility appears in a letter to Mr. Hunt of 28 September 1896 by George F. Weston (1860-1946), superintendent of the agriculture department at Biltmore Estate, who had reviewed three sheets of blueprints for the complex and was returning them to the architect:

As to the character of the buildings, I strongly advise that the incubator-room, office and feeding shed be of brick, pebble-dashed, with a roof of tile, the brooder-house and long run of pens attached to the feed-shed to be of timber and wire lath, pebble-dashed, with a roof of dipped shingles.

I notice that you have called for wood shingles on the poultryman's house, and would respectfully ask you to reconsider this, as Mr. Vanderbilt certainly told me that all of the main buildings should be uniform with the rest of the Estate building--namely with tile roofs.

Mr. Weston then continued with very specific comments on the design and finishing of the incubator room and office in this building.

The Biltmore estate poultry operations were short-lived and expensive, and their demise was announced on the front page of *The New York Times* on 9 November 1906 under the headline "No More Biltmore Poultry."

## NO MORE BILTMORE POULTRY.

George W. Vanderbilt to Abolish His Famous Farms

*Special to The New York Times*

ASHEVILLE, N. C., Nov. 8.--The announcement is made that George W. Vanderbilt will abandon his famous poultry farms, as he has lost heavily on them. The farms are considered the finest anywhere in the country and his chickens have brought high prices, and he always took all the prizes at the State fairs.

The farms have been a hobby of Mr. Vanderbilt, but a very expensive one, the deficit running into the thousands of dollars every year. Supt. J. R. Livingston is to go and the entire farms are to be abolished.

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The four-part building, anchored by the central two-story block, follows the estate vocabulary in its design and finish; it stands on a low brick perimeter apron, the walls are finished with rough-coat stucco (but without the usual brick dressings), the eaves are ornamented with shaped rafter ends and painted brown as is the exterior woodwork, and the roofs are either hip or gable. Whether the building had a clay tile or wood shingle roof originally is unclear; the present roofing is sheet metal. The center entrance in the west façade of the two-story, double-pile office block is sheltered by a bracketed hood. The one-and-a-half story wing to the north is two bays wide and two bays deep and fitted with arched-headed windows; the loft-level entrance in the north gable end, originally accessible by stairs, retains its handsome molded and bracketed hood which is engaged with the roof. The one-story gable-roof wing to the south terminates with a two-story hip-roof block. The interior of the building, with walls of painted brick or tongue-and-groove ceiling, provided living quarters on the second story of the office block, and retains most of its original finish. The incubator room was in the south wing; the feed room and a shop was contained in the north wing.

- 85. Dairy Worker's Cottage III  
1935  
Contributing building

The construction of this house is documented in a letter of 23 July 1935 written by Mr. Adams which served as the contract with C.G. Worley, E.A. Ponder, and W. N. Hawes to erect the house for the sum of \$535 with materials to be provided by The Biltmore Company. The house was to be built to plans prepared by Anthony Lord with the exception that the horizontal sill board was to be eliminated and the board and batten-siding was to cover the sill and the brick foundation wall between the piers was to be eliminated and the space filled with vertical boards. "This house is to be constructed on a site to be designated at or near the site of the old house known as Antlers (sic) Hall." It is the only one of three contemporary houses which once stood in the vicinity of Antler Hall to survive. The one-and-a-half story rectangular frame house is sheathed with board-and-batten with weatherboards in the gable ends and is covered with a side-gable roof of asphalt shingles that engages a full-façade porch on its south, front three-bay elevation. The porch has square piers connected by a picket railing. A brick chimney flanked by windows on the first and second stories stands in the east gable end. The house is painted brown with white trim; the windows are fitted with six-over-six sash. At some point the board skirting between the brick piers was replaced with brick.

- 86. Garage  
ca. 1935  
Contributing building

Believed to be contemporary with the above cottage, this single-bay garage is covered with brown-painted board and batten and a front-gable roof of sheet metal.

- 87. Cottage  
ca. 1900; moved and drastically remodeled, 1984-1985;  
moved back to original site, 2001  
Noncontributing building

This one-and-a-half story frame house, finished with rough coat stucco and covered with a gable-on-hip roof was one of a pair of ca. 1900 houses that stood on a shallow terrace above and to the northeast of the Horse Barn and Stable and were occupied by dairy employees. In 1984-1985 it was moved uphill to the northeast (to a site west of the Inn on Biltmore Estate) where it was remodeled for the assistant wine master at the winery. He occupied the house until construction began on the inn at which time it came to be used as on-site offices by the



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construction company. With the completion of the inn, the house was moved back to its original location where it now houses offices.

88. Inn on Biltmore Estate  
1999-2001  
Noncontributing building

Described by one writer in *The New York Times* (15 April 2001) as sitting “like a fortress on its own hill,” the Inn on Biltmore Estate is a 213-room hotel designed by Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback & Associates, Inc., of Atlanta, Georgia. The design of the massive building incorporates references to both Biltmore House and the turn-of-the-century Shingle Style in its massing, materials, and details. Standing on the edge of a hilltop, the plan of the hotel is essentially a reverse “L,” which embraces the hill, with paired projecting blocks of unequal height positioned as diagonal wings. The “regular” appearance of the plan is diffused on the hotel’s elevations, which range from two to seven stories in height, where a series of gable-front and tower blocks, offsets, and changes in fenestration and rooflines lend the highly-asymmetrical building a modern picturesque appearance. A porte cochere on the north side of the inn welcomes guests whose cars are valet-parked in landscaped lots also on the north. On the southeast and southwest sides of the inn, respectively, a large rectangular terrace and a shaded veranda provide guests handsome views west across the estate, the French Broad River, and on to Mount Pisgah. The scored-stucco elevations of the inn rise from stone foundations; the roofing is a manufactured material that simulates slate. The design of the inn, its interior arrangements, facilities, and services, are geared to both individual guests in its 213 rooms and suites and corporate guests who can be accommodated in groups of up to 160 in the inn’s Vanderbilt Room, two banquet rooms, and two meeting rooms.

89. Farmcote (formerly Woodcote)  
19th century; renovated 1895; greatly remodeled 1935  
Contributing building

The appearance of this well-maintained Colonial Revival-style two-story frame house, occupying one of the choice sites in the Biltmore landscape, provides little indication of its complex history and status as one of the oldest buildings here. An answer to the question of when the core of the house was built in the nineteenth century cannot be given; however, it was the home of George West and the seat of his farm that was acquired by Mr. Vanderbilt in the early 1890s while he was purchasing the property on Riverbend Peninsula. It appears on the 1896 “Guide Map of Biltmore Estate” as “Woodcote” and was then the residence of Carl Alwin Schenck; Mr. Schenck came to Biltmore in April 1895 as the head of the forestry department, stayed first with the Olmsteds at River Cliff Cottage, and removed to Woodcote in fall 1895. In his memoir, *Cradle of Forestry in America: The Biltmore Forest School, 1898-1913*, Mr. Schenck describes Woodcote as “the fine old country place heretofore occupied by Baron d’Alinge,” and it was here that the forester received Charles Sprague Sargent and John Muir as houseguests in 1895 when they visited the estate together. Between 1895 and 1901, enhancements were made to the property for the benefit of the forester. Improvements to the house and a proposed new stable, noted in a letter of 12 August 1895 by Richard Sharp Smith to Mr. McNamee, were completed by November of that year. Richard Sharp Smith prepared plans for servants’ quarters for Woodcote in 1898. Both the servants’ quarters and the new stable appear on the “Planting Plan” that the Olmsted Brothers prepared for Woodcote in February 1901. Dr. Schenck occupied Woodcote into spring 1909 when he was dismissed by Mr. Vanderbilt.

The history and occupation of Woodcote between 1909 and 1935 remain to be confirmed; however, in 1935 it regained its status as an important residence on the estate. Having become president of The Biltmore Company

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and deciding to live on the estate, Junius Greene Adams commissioned improvements to the house from Anthony Lord and renamed it "Farmcote"; apparently the nineteenth-century house known as Farmcote, also appearing on the 1896 map, had been lost to fire or demolition. Mr. Lord completed the plans for the newly christened Farmcote in the Colonial Revival style in March 1935, largely producing the house that survives today. Mr. Adams occupied Farmcote until his death in 1962, and it was next the home of farm manager Albert Clark until 1979. In 1979, the year the Biltmore Estate Winery sold the first estate vintage, Farmcote became the residence of wine master Philippe Jourdain who oversaw the conversion of the dairy into the winery, and directed its operations. It remains an employee residence.

Woodcote/Farmcote is a handsome, well-maintained Colonial Revival-style weatherboarded frame house comprising a five-bay main block, facing north, and a two-part two-story ell. The single-pile front block of the house has a highly symmetrical appearance enhanced by one-story bay windows on its east and west gable ends, paired interior chimneys (that flank the center hall), a center-bay entrance pavilion distinguished by a Palladian-style window on the second story, and a full-façade porch supported by single and paired piers. The ell is a full two stories in height in the two bays adjoining the front block, and then lessens in its height for the final two bays where the second-story windows are actually wall dormers and the mass of the ell is cleverly disguised. The interior of the house follows a center-hall plan and its fabric, except for what appears to be its original staircase, is largely Colonial Revival and dates from the 1930s renovation and some later improvements in the same spirit.

90. Stable/Garage  
1895  
Contributing building

The proposed construction of this building is documented in two letters written in the late summer of 1895 by Richard Sharp Smith. After a visit to Woodcote to evaluate the house and its dependencies he wrote Mr. McNamee on 12 August:

The present Stables are in such a dilapidated condition that it would be foolish to spend any money in repairing same. New stables should be built and present ones destroyed. What kind of stables will be needed? Dr. Schenck thinks a building similar to River Cliffe (sic) Stable? These stables cost \$1100.

A month later, on 17 September, he wrote to Edward J. Harding, Mr. McNamee's assistant. "Mr. Vanderbilt wishes the suggested changes to Dr. Schenck's house and new stable buildings be commenced at once and finished as soon as possible." This work was advanced and the stable built by November 1895 when Dr. Schenck was residing at Woodcote. The stable/garage is a one story with attic frame building standing on a brick foundation, with rough-coat stucco elevations and a gable-on-hip roof of sheet metal. The rectangular plan of the building is expanded on the west side of the north front by a two part ell, with a largish opening fitted with paired six-pane above three panel doors, which probably contained the carriage house. A pair of openings fitted with later overhead garage doors and a conventional doorway open on the north into the main building that has a series of windows on its other sides and a dormer window on the rear. Inset in the front roof plane is an opening into the loft that is fitted with paired board-and-rail doors. The stable's brick chimney indicates the probable existence of original living quarters here for a hostler.

91. Garage  
ca. 1997  
Noncontributing building

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Standing on a poured concrete form foundation, this three-bay garage is sheathed with white-painted board and batten and covered with a sheet metal shed roof. Three openings occupy the north front; the sides and rear of the building are blind.

92. (former) Power Station  
ca. 1930-1940  
Contributing structure

This simple rectangular masonry building, finished with stucco elevations, is believed to be associated with the interwar period transmission of electricity on the estate. It stands derelict on a hillock above the Swannanoa River and its bottomlands.

93. Truck Farm Building  
1896  
Contributing building

Although Warrington G. Lawrence produced at least three known proposal drawings for the Truck Farm in January and February 1895, it was not until a year later in January and February of 1896 that, in the employ of Richard Howland Hunt, he prepared the set of drawings from which this building was erected. Italian (or French) in concept, this agricultural building is rectangular in form with rooms, offices, stalls, and sheds arrayed on three (north, east, west) sides of a large brick paved-courtyard, measuring approximately seventy-four feet square. A long, tall brick wall encloses the south side of the courtyard and has doorways near its ends. These doorways provided access to the set of large glass houses extending south and perpendicular to the above wall. The Truck Farm and two of its long glasshouses appear on the 1896 estate guide map. The Biltmore Estate Archives includes ca. 1899 photographs of cucumbers and tomatoes growing in the glasshouses, of the display of Biltmore vegetables and produce shown at the North Carolina State Fair in 1899, and a photograph of the glasshouses partially inundated in the Flood of 1916. The glasshouses were taken down after the flood. With their loss, the scale of truck farming was greatly reduced; however, it continued with the production of field crops for some time.

The Manorial-style Truck Farm Building is a handsome rectangular building, 106 feet wide and 88 feet deep, whose construction and finish follows the estate formula with red brick foundations and dressings, rough-coat elevations, and red tile hip and gable roofs on its several blocks. Its broad façade, looking north to the Swannanoa River, has an arched brick-framed doorway in the center of a long blind wall anchored by square two-level hip-roof pavilions at its ends. The building's west side, which extends for some thirty to forty feet beyond, south of the courtyard wall, has a window in the pavilion illuminating the feed room, five small openings placed high in the wall to vent five stalls (and a sixth such opening in the adjoining repair room), a window illuminating the office in the southwest corner of the courtyard, and a large arch-headed opening for bringing vegetables from the fields into the courtyard for processing. The west elevation beyond this opening, whose south edge is on axis with the courtyard wall, is blind. On the east side it has four bays which faced onto the glasshouses. The truck farm's east wall is blind except for paired infilled openings in the lower level of the front pavilion and a window on its second level, two small windows in the storage room, and the arched opening at its south end next to the south courtyard wall.

The interior of the truck farm, while simply altered for a series of twentieth-century, mostly storage usage, retains the signal features of its original appearance and is a fascinating complex whose rooms, sheds, and offices opened onto the courtyard. Proceeding in counter-clockwise fashion, from the north entrance, was a large two-bay store room for "Large Tools," a two-stall lavatory, the "Feed Room" in the northwest corner, a

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stable with five stalls, a repair room, a tool room, and the six-sided “office” that was fitted with a fireplace. Returning to the main entrance and continuing clockwise, a three-bay “Wagon Shed” occupied the front of the courtyard, a store room was housed in the northeast pavilion, the “Washing Shed” occupied the center third of this side, and it connected with the large adjoining storage room by way of an incline for moving crates of processed vegetables by hand or barrow. The storage room, which projects into the courtyard, has a door opening onto a loading porch with steps down to either side.

- 94. Truck Gardener’s Cottage  
1896; renovated in 1982  
Contributing building

The plans for the Truck Gardener’s Cottage were drawn in the office of Richard Howland Hunt in spring 1896 and bear the date stamp of 16 May. The specifications for the cottage are stamped 9 June, and the house was largely completed by the end of the year. The rectangular one-and-a-half story house repeats the materials and appearance of the adjoining Truck Farm with a brick foundation, rough coat stucco elevations, and a tall hip roof of red tile finished with exposed ornamental rafter ends. The roof is pierced by a double-window dormer above the north façade, paired dormers on the east and west sides, and a single dormer on the rear. The cottage’s front porch is inset in its northeast corner, while the rear porch carries fully across the south elevation. The living room, dining room, and kitchen on the first story are illuminated by paired arch-headed windows holding nine-over-one sash, while dormer windows holding eight-over-one sash illuminate the four bedrooms on the second story. The cottage is built on a center, stair hall plan. Virtually all of its original woodwork, including the staircase, living room mantel, unusual five-panel doors, and door and window surrounds remain intact. After truck farming effectively ended on the estate, the cottage continued in use as an employee residence; in the 1940s it was occupied by John Redmond, a long-time employee at Biltmore. In 1982 the cottage was sympathetically renovated for use as the estate guest house.

- 95. Swannanoa River Bridge  
ca. 1896  
Contributing structure

In September 1896 Charles McNamee makes reference to “our new bridge” across the Swannanoa River in a letter to a Southern Railway official. Turn-of-the-century documentary photographs show a bridge with stucco-encased sides and abutments that is markedly similar to the present structure. Whether the bridge survived the Flood of 1916 or was rebuilt immediately on virtually the same model is not now known. The bridge, with a humped center, has metal sides that were originally encased in rough coat stucco and an asphalt-paved bed. While the deteriorated stucco has virtually all disappeared from the bridge sides, sections of it survive on the angular abutments at each end. On the north bank a pair of smooth-face stuccoed piers hold a metal gate protecting the bridge. For some two decades, at least from 1896 until the Flood of 1916, the bridge here was the estate’s principal connection with Victoria, a small town on the north side of the Swannanoa that was eventually annexed into Asheville. The Swannanoa Gate and the estate development on the west side of the river are prominently featured on the 1896 guide map. Here, on the north bank stood the Biltmore nursery and greenhouses which propagated and grew out plants for the estate and commercial sales from 1898 to 1916. Mr. McNamee’s (now lost) house, “Oldford,” and Mr. Vanderbilt’s development on Vernon Hill both had Victoria addresses. With the sale of the nursery property, irreparably damaged in the 1916 flood, to the Southern Railway Company, this bridge ceased to be an important entrance to the estate.

96. Lagoon  
Later 1890s  
Contributing site

Covering approximately six acres, the Lagoon is one of two principal water features on the estate that were designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. On the 1896 "Guide Map of Biltmore Estate" it is shown and labeled "Proposed Lagoon." Situated due west of the mansion between River Road and the French Broad River, it was devised by Mr. Olmsted as an incident in the scenery visible from Biltmore House and the South Terrace, providing a punctuation point in a wooded landscape stretching west to Mount Pisgah. The Lagoon is encircled by a drive which provided a pleasurable carriage ride and views for Mr. Vanderbilt and his guests. Whether its location was so intentionally calculated or not, the surface of the Lagoon captures a reflection of the great west elevation of Biltmore House and numerous publicity photographs are often made from a vantage point on its west bank.

### Sheep Farm Overview

The Sheep Farm is one of the four named farms (with French Broad, Plateau, and Ferry) together with the Dairy and Truck Farms that appear on the 1896 "Guide Map of Biltmore Estate," and of these it is apparently the earliest established under Mr. Vanderbilt's ownership. The Sheep Barn and the attendant Shepherd's Cottage (#98) are the two oldest surviving agricultural buildings on the estate erected for Mr. Vanderbilt. Sheathed with wood shingles, they predate the formula for estate buildings established later, which prescribed brick foundations, rough-cast elevations, red tile roofs, and brown-painted exterior woodwork. The Sheep Barn and cottage were both designed by Edward H. Burnett (1849-1925), an agricultural consultant and specialist in both Jersey and Guernsey dairy cattle, who consulted to Mr. Vanderbilt at New Dorp prior to Biltmore, and also to Dr. and Mrs. Webb at Shelburne Farms and Hamilton Twombly at Florham in New Jersey. This farm, adapted for dairy use in the 1930s or 1940s, has been essentially abandoned since at least the 1970s.

97. Sheep Barn  
1890-1891; altered 1930s or 1940s  
Contributing building

Plans for this building, labeled "Sheep-Sheds for G.W. Vanderbilt-Esq., Biltmore, N.C." are labeled "E. Burnett-fecit" and undated; however, they were produced in December 1890. On 1 December 1890 Mr. McNamee wrote Mr. Burnett, "We are awaiting detailed plans for the sheep buildings which you promised the Baron, before we can commence to build them." The plans arrived by 20 December when Vanderbilt's agent again wrote to Mr. Burnett, "The building, I think, will be a very great addition to the estate. I think your drawing is very good." Lumber and shingles having been ordered for the sheep barn in November, construction began immediately and continued into the spring of 1891 when Mr. McNamee ordered lightening rods for the buildings at the sheep farm from the Ames Plow Company. In January 1892 George F. Weston, Baron d'Alinge's assistant, prepared plans for "Drainage of Sheep Sheds & Yards."

The sheep barn is a deteriorated rectangular frame building comprising a one-story with loft gambrel roof center block that projects slightly forward of long gable-roof wings to each side. It is sheathed with wood shingles and covered with a sheet-metal roof. The northwest gambrel-front elevation of the center block retains its original appearance including the center entrance into the stable level and a horizontal, hooded three-part window above to illuminate the hay loft. A very early metal-band silo, probably the oldest silo on the estate, stands on its southeast gambrel end, and is fitted with a metal roof and access tower with its own conical roof. The present appearance of the one-story wings differs somewhat from Burnett's design, principally because the barn was

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adapted for milking, probably in the 1930s or 1940s. Nevertheless, they continue to stand on brick foundations, retain the horizontal openings for ventilation and light devised by Burnett, and (at least) one of the dormer windows which originally punctuated the wing roofs remains in place. The symmetrical doorways, protected by sliding doors, were closed up, shingled over, and partially refitted with horizontal openings. A weatherboarded frame gable-roof milk house stands on a poured-in-form concrete foundation off the southwest end of the barn. Although the barn is deteriorated and has suffered water damage from a lack of attention, it retains its essential structural integrity, is salvageable, and remains one of the most important buildings in the history of Biltmore Estate.

98. Shepherd's Cottage  
1890-1892  
Contributing building

The plans for the Shepherd's Cottage, also undated and bearing Mr. Burnett's name, are probably contemporary with the barn plans. In a letter of 9 January 1891, Mr. McNamee wrote Mr. Burnett telling him that the barn is under construction, material for the house is at hand, and construction will begin when a site is selected. The completion of the cottage in the summer of 1892 is confirmed by Richard Sharp Smith's review of the interior plaster work by W.E. Wolfe in July. The small rectangular one-story three-room cottage designed by Mr. Burnett, standing on a brick foundation with wood shingle elevations, a side-gable roof, and a center brick chimney was subsequently expanded by additions, sheathed with wood shingles and board and batten. The cottage's (mostly) eight-over-twelve window sash remain in place in the original window openings while others were relocated to exterior walls when the additions were made on the north gable end of the house. The front porch is inset in the house's southeast corner, and a twelve-pane door opens into the living room in the south half of the cottage; four panel doors open from it into the bedroom and kitchen in the northwest and southwest corners, respectively, of the original block. The living room retains its original finish including a tall vertical tongue-and-groove wainscot, a brick fireplace with a bracketed stone shelf over the firebox and a similar wood shelf engaged with the top of the wainscot. An original shelf unit, with diagonally sheathed, panel doors on the bottom cupboard, stands in the southeast corner. The bedroom and kitchen are plastered. Together with the Gardener's Cottage, the Shepherd's Cottage is one of the two oldest surviving houses erected by Mr. Vanderbilt; it ceased to be occupied as a residence in the 1970s or 1980s. Although unoccupied for about a quarter-century, the roof has remained intact, and the cottage, while deteriorated, is essentially sound and restorable as a dwelling.

99. "Red" House  
ca. 1935-1950  
Noncontributing building

Deriving its name from its red-painted elevations with white trim, this modest one-story frame house stands on a cement block foundation and is sheathed with German siding. Probably dating from the interwar period, and abandoned as a workman's residence in the 1980s when the dairy operations ceased, the house has deteriorated and become ruinous.

100. Plateau Farm  
ca. 1895-1910; ca. 1915-1930; 1930s; and later  
Contributing site

Plateau Farm is one of the named farms on the 1896 "Guide Map of Biltmore Estate" and one of only two (together with the Sheep Farm) on the west side of the French Broad River. While the date (1935-1936) of only

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one building, the farm cottage (#101), is known for certain, the nine buildings and structures here appear to span the period of its productive existence, from the turn of the century to the demise of the dairy operations in the 1980s. The building appearing here on the 1896 map is lost; however, the core of the small barn (#105), standing on brick foundations appears to date to the turn of the century. The finish of the large barn, with weatherboards and wood shingles, bracketed eaves and some surviving twelve-pane windows that are curiously similar to those in the Shepherd's cottage, indicates its early history and kinship to the Inanda Barn (#128). Standing at its west gable end is one of the two oldest silos (#108) on the estate. The farm cottage (#101), the poultry house (#102), and the milk house (#107) all date to the interwar period expansion of the dairy operations by Mr. Adams. The three board and batten sheathed outbuildings probably date to the 1950s and 1960s, although the large five-bay equipment shed could be later. Like the other farms on the estate, Plateau Farm had a complement of fields, meadows, and pastures. Much of this acreage continues in use as fenced pasture.

101. Farm Cottage  
1935-1936  
Noncontributing building

In a letter of 1 October 1935, Mr. Adams wrote to Everett D. Mitchell the farm manager concerning the building of "workmen's cottages" for farm employees on the estate, citing the construction of two cottages, the beginning of work on the cottage at Antler Hall (see #85), "and immediately following, or concurrently, Austin's house at the Plateau Farm which we located with Mr. Beadle yesterday afternoon." On completion the house, built to stock plans prepared by Anthony Lord, was occupied by Cornelius Austin, the herdsman at Plateau Farm. The one-story with attic frame house stands on brick piers with a board skirt, is sheathed with board and batten with weatherboards in the gable ends, and is covered with an asphalt shingle side-gable roof that engages a full-façade east front porch. The window openings hold six-over-six sash. A brick chimney flanked by windows on the first story and attic level stands on the north gable end. Abandoned when dairy operations ceased on the estate in the 1980s, the house has suffered serious internal damage and decay because of a hole in the roof; its front porch floor and a service porch on the south gable end have collapsed.

102. Poultry House  
ca. 1935-1940  
Contributing building

The poultry house is a rectangular frame building sheathed with board and batten and covered with a shed roof of sheet metal. The house has a wood floor and a screened opening to the east, while an inferior vertical board addition on the south end has a dirt floor. The interior retains part of its original fittings including roosts with slanted platforms; top-hinged board-and-rail doors on the rear elevation could be raised and the chicken waste scooped out.

103. Equipment Shed  
ca. 1960  
Noncontributing building

This five-bay rectangular shed for farm equipment has creosote pole uprights and a frame shed roof of sheet metal. The south front is open as is the rear while the east and west sides are sheathed with board and batten.

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## 104. Machine Shop

ca. 1960

Noncontributing building

This small gable-front frame building stands on a cement block foundation, is sheathed with board and batten, and covered by a sheet metal roof. It has a door and window opening on the south front, an opening on the east side, and a later board and batten sheathed shed on the west side. The interior, with a wood floor and unfinished walls, retains work counters, and wall bins for parts, etc.

## 105. Small Barn

ca. 1900; later sheds

Contributing building

The original block of this building, expanded by sheds on its east and west sides and an enclosed stable shed on its south gable end, is an unusual stable with loft barn standing on a brick foundation. It contains five stalls with framed openings on the east side and stall doors on its west side. The stable level is sheathed with board and batten while the loft is enclosed with unusually wide weatherboards which appear on no other agricultural building on the estate. The barn and its sheds are covered with sheet metal.

## 106. Large Barn

ca. 1915-1930

Contributing building

Although the specific history of this deteriorated picturesque barn remains to be confirmed, its appearance and finish mark it as one of the most intriguing agricultural buildings on the estate. The large rectangular barn has weatherboarding on the stable level and wood shingles above. The gable end roof is bracketed and covered with sheet metal. Openings in each end of the loft were originally fitted with paired sliding four-panel doors; however, only one, on the north gable end, survives. The framed horizontal window openings on the sides and ends of the barn were fitted with center-hinged twelve-pane sash, a number of which survive although the building has been largely abandoned and neglected since the 1980s. The ground level of the barn, used for milking, has a poured concrete floor and flush sheathed walls.

## 107. Milk House

ca. 1935-1940

Contributing building

Like the other surviving milk houses standing with barns on the estate, this one-story building is rectangular in plan, weatherboarded, and covered with a side-gable sheet-metal roof. It housed the milk tank, together with the wash-up and storage rooms for milking equipment.

## 108-108a. Silos

ca. 1935-1940; ca. 1942

Two contributing structures

Standing at the south gable end of the large barn, this pair of silos includes a glazed terra cotta silo (#108) made with blocks manufactured and stamped "Pomona" that were supplied by the Lindley family's Pomona brick and tile works in Greensboro and a later cement-panel silo (#108a) identical to the nearby pair at Alta Vista Farm. Both are covered with conical cement roofs.



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- 108b. Garage  
ca. 1960  
Contributing building

This small single-bay frame garage stands on a cement block foundation, is covered with board and batten, and has a front-gable roof of sheet metal; the opening on the east front is nearly full-width.

109. Farm Cottage ("White" house)  
ca. 1935-1950  
Contributing building

On the 1896 map of the estate a house appears to stand at this site or nearby; however, this rectangular one-story frame house probably dates from the interwar period. Consisting of paired gable-front blocks flanking a center bay, now fitted with a screened porch on the east front, it stands on brick piers with brick infill. Although the house has been covered with aluminum siding, it retains its four-over-one sash. The wing added on the north end stands on a cement block foundation. The house's roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

110. Garage  
ca. 1935-1950  
Contributing building

This small one-bay garage stands on a poured-in-form concrete foundation, is sheathed with board and batten, and is covered with an asphalt shingle gable-front roof. A trio of brackets support the east front eave. The opening is fitted with a modern overhead garage door. Window openings on the sides and rear are fitted with four-pane sash.

111. Alta Vista Farm  
ca. 1935; 1942-1943; 1960s-1970s  
Contributing site

The site of Alta Vista Farm, called "Spring Farm" in some 1940s estate documents, lies astride the west edge of the 1896 "Guide Map of Biltmore Estate" and appears to have been established in the early-twentieth century as one of several tenant-operated farms on the west side of the estate. Sometime in 1942 a fire destroyed or irreparably damaged the then-existing barn and its tile and metal silos; the present gambrel roof barn, milk house, and the pair of cement tile silos (#112-114) were rebuilt on the site in 1942-1943 and placed in operation. The oldest surviving building at Alta Vista is probably the farm cottage (#117) which was built to the plan prepared in August 1930 by Charles N. Parker and built in at least one other surviving instance (#71); its small gambrel roof barn (#120) is probably contemporary. In the 1960s to 1970s Alta Vista became the location of a principal milking station on the west side of the estate and a large milking parlor, now lost, was erected to the west of the main barn; the feeding shed/pen complex (#116) dates to that project and survives. The ground scales and scale house (#115) for weighing milk in tanker trucks also probably date to this expansion.

112. Main Barn and Milk House  
1942-1943  
Contributing building

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Like buildings at the calf and test barn complex (#55) which drew national attention, this sixty-cow milking barn at Alta Vista also gained a share of interest. In a letter written by Mr. Adams to a Dr. M. Crumpler in Danville, Virginia, he provided useful background:

Ted Besh tells me that you are interested in the plan of our Alta Vista Barn which, incidentally, has attracted a great deal of favorable comment and has been copied by quite a number of people.

I take pleasure in enclosing herewith a blueprint of the barn with a warning that it is done by an amateur. I find that I can get my ideas on paper better than I can transmit them to an architect and our construction foreman seems to understand them and make any necessary allowances.

Unfortunately, no copy of the plan is known to survive. The large rectangular barn, three bays wide and fifteen bays deep, stands on a poured concrete foundation, is sheathed with board and batten, and covered with a gambrel roof of sheet metal. A trio of dormers is symmetrically positioned on the south side of the roof. The east front looks as it did when built, with a center stable level opening flanked by windows, with a small loft access above and a larger loft opening in the upper end protected by paired board-and-rail doors, except that a second opening has been cut into the elevation to the south of the center opening for vehicular access. The original sliding doors are lost; however, the doors on the loft openings remain in place. On each gambrel end the roof projects beyond the elevation to protect a hay lift mounted along the ridge line. The north and south side elevations are symmetrical with seven window openings on each side of centered doorways opening onto the cross axial passage; these openings hold nine-pane sash windows. On the south side the doorway opens under a covered walkway to the rectangular milk house that is also covered with board and batten and an end-gable roof of sheet metal. The milk house has a concrete floor and plaster walls on metal lath. Although the barn was abandoned for dairy operations in the 1980s and has since been used for other purposes, the flush sheathed, well-finished interior remains, its poured concrete floor and center aisle plan with significant sections of its stanchions and fittings in place. A corner ladder provides access to the loft that is fitted with fans for ventilation.

### 113-113a. Grain silos

ca. 1960s

Two noncontributing structures

Standing together near the site of the now lost milking parlor, these two round metal grain storage silos are of prefabricated construction and conventional in appearance.

### 114-114a. Silos

1942-1943

Two contributing structures

This handsome pair of cement panel silos were built to replace the earlier pair of tile and metal silos that were lost to fire in 1942. They are fitted with access towers and covered with conical cement roofs with finials.

### 115-115a. Scales and Scale House

ca. 1960s

One noncontributing structure, one noncontributing building

Probably erected coincident with the construction of the large milking parlor here in the 1960s, this property consists of a concrete well with wood deck onto which trucks could be driven for weighing, and a small frame scale house in which the "Fairbanks-Morse Scales" were housed. The scale house (#115a) has a wood floor,

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board and batten elevations, and a shed roof of sheet metal. The house has a board-and-rail door on its side and a window on the front overlooking the well.

## 116-116c. Feeding Shed/Pen Complex

ca. 1960s/1970s

Three noncontributing buildings, one noncontributing structure

Positioned downgrade and southwest of the main barn, this complex consists of a series of fenced feeding and holding pens anchored by three large contemporary one-story frame sheds with built-in troughs for feeding (#116-116b). They have a generally consistent appearance with board-and-batten sheathed gable ends and sheet-metal gable roofs. They have been adapted and partially enclosed for use by the sheep operations. Nearby, to the east, is a large trench silo (#116c) with poured concrete walls and floor from which ensilage was fed to cattle.

## 117. Farm Cottage

ca. 1930-1935

Contributing building

This cottage was built to the surviving plan prepared in August 1930 by Asheville architect Charles N. Parker and labeled "A Farm Cottage for Biltmore Estate Dairy Farm Dept." The cottage was occupied for about fifty years by a dairyman; after the end of dairying operations here it has served as a residence for an estate employee. The rectangular one-and-a-half story frame cottage stands on a poured concrete foundation, is sheathed in brown painted wood shingles, and covered with a side gable asphalt-shingle roof. The original three-bay south façade includes an arcaded three-part porch in its southwest corner. A brick chimney with a tapering stack, flanked by windows on each level, stands on the west gable end. A one-bay addition, standing on cement blocks, was added on the east gable end. The rear elevation includes the now-enclosed shed-roof service porch and a shed roof dormer.

## 118. Garage

ca. 1965-1975

Noncontributing building

This single-bay garage is built of cement blocks and covered with a gable-front asphalt-shingle roof. A near-full-width opening on the south gable end opens into the cement floored interior.

## 119. Pump House

ca. 1965-1975

Noncontributing building

Also built of cement blocks, this small rectangular building is covered with a side gable roof of asphalt shingles. It has a metal door on its east side and a small roof-top ventilator.

## 120. Barn

ca. 1930-1940

Contributing building

Probably built for feeding and shelter, this rectangular frame barn stands on a poured cement and aggregate foundation, is sheathed with board and batten, and covered with a gambrel roof of sheet metal. It has stable-level openings on its south (front) and north gambrel ends, and five framed openings with four-pane sash

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occurring symmetrically on its side elevations. The tall opening above the stable doorway opens onto the loft and rises nearly to the ridge line. The interior of the barn has a dirt floor, unsheathed walls, and a small wood hay rack on its east side.

121. Long Valley Farm  
1930s  
Noncontributing site

Long Valley Farm also occupies property acquired by Mr. Vanderbilt after the guide map of 1896 was prepared, and whether it was devised on the site of an earlier farm is not known. In the early 1930s, before Mr. Adams undertook the expansion and rebuilding of the dairy operations, it was the only dairy farm on the west side of the French Broad River operated directly by the estate and outside the tenant/rental system. Today only one historic building, the small barn (#122) survives here. The two houses occupied by employees are lost, and in 1998 the large gambrel-roof milking barn was destroyed by fire. A new barn (#123) was erected on its site. In 1998 a part of the farm was set aside for use by the retail nursery operations and cold frames and related facilities placed here.

122. Small Barn  
ca. 1935-1940  
Contributing building

The small barn is a rectangular frame building standing on a poured-in-form concrete foundation, sheathed with German siding, and covered with a gable front roof of sheet metal. Its three-bay front and rear gable-end elevations have center passages, protected by paired sliding board and rail doors, flanked by small framed windows with six-pane sash. The north front has a tall opening from the floor of the loft to the roof's ridge that is fitted with paired board-and-rail doors occupying about two-thirds of the height. Open space above the door is flanked by vented wall sections. The roof projects here to shelter the hay lift mounted in the ridge. On the south rear elevation a small opening onto the loft is protected by a sliding door while the upper gable end is vented with horizontal boards. The center passage interior has a concrete floor and flush sheathed walls and ceiling. The building is now used as a machine and repair shop.

123. Large Barn  
2000  
Noncontributing building

Replicating the general gambrel roof form of the frame barn lost to fire, the large barn is a rectangular metal frame building erected on a concrete pad, sheathed with manufactured vertical metal siding, and topped with a metal gambrel roof. It has centered openings in each gable end at ground level with openings above into the wood-floored loft. The side elevations are asymmetrical.

- 124-124c. Nursery Complex  
1998  
Three noncontributing buildings, one noncontributing structure

Established here in the summer of 1998, this complex of facilities for growing out nursery stock for sale in the estate gift and garden shops and for use in the estate gardens, includes a three-bay garage and potting shed (#124) sheathed with board and batten and a side-gable sheet metal roof, a small pump house (#124a) sheathed

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with exterior sheet siding and a front gable roof, a manufactured trailer (#124b) used as the site office, and seven metal cold frames (#124c) with sheet plastic or net coverings.

125. Shooting Range  
ca. 1995  
Noncontributing site

Located west of the nursery complex, the shooting range comprises a four-bay rectangular shelter partially enclosed with vertical sheet siding, standing on a concrete pad and covered with a side-gable asphalt shingle roof, and the nearby target range. The facility is used by local law enforcement agencies.

126. "Jones" House"  
Late nineteenth century; renovated ca. 1935-1945  
Contributing building

Named for a mid-twentieth century occupant and estate worker, Walter Jones, this one-and-a-half-story weatherboarded frame house has a one-story core which dates to the later nineteenth century and is one of only two buildings surviving on the estate which date to the pre-Vanderbilt era. In the interwar period the house was raised by a half story and covered with its present gambrel roof. Inset in the floor of the shed porch on the east rear elevation is a door giving onto wood stairs descending to a partial basement with mortared stone walls. The five-room interior has a center hall plan and retains walls sheathed with unusually wide horizontal boards and molded four-panel doors; the two rooms at the back of the house have a tongue-and-groove sheathed wainscot.

127. "Inanda" House  
Late-nineteenth century  
Contributing building

Deriving its name from the Inanda community here on the Brevard Road, the "Inanda" house is a one-story Victorian cottage standing on a stone foundation, sheathed with weatherboards, and covered with gable roofs on its three blocks. Together with the "Jones" house, it is one of two houses surviving on the estate that predate Mr. Vanderbilt's ownership of the property and provide insight into the earlier history of the estate lands. The original finish of the house includes vertically-sheathed gable ends with saw tooth edging, two-over-two sash in surrounds with molded tops, and a front door with arched-headed panes. The interior has an asymmetrical plan with wood floors, plastered walls, and molded door and window surrounds. The house was occupied into the mid-twentieth century and was one of at least five "Brevard Road Houses" occupied by dairy workers in the 1940s.

128. Inanda Barn  
ca. 1915-1930  
Contributing building

Sharing obvious similarities to the large barn (#106) at Plateau Farm, this barn is one of two important dairy buildings that appear to date to the period between the construction of the Dairy Barn and Building (#78) in 1900-1902 and the expansion and building program of the late interwar period instituted by Mr. Adams. The rectangular frame building stands on a poured cement and aggregate foundation and is covered with a sheet-metal gable-front roof. The lower half of its elevations is sheathed with German siding while the upper, loft level is sheathed with wood shingles. The three-bay gable ends have center openings on the ground and loft levels; windows flank the lower doors, the loft openings are protected by sliding doors, and paired eight-pane

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windows are set in the upper gable ends which are also finished with brackets. The northwest side had a center door flanked by three windows on each side while the southeast side has eight framed window openings. The interior has a poured concrete floor and flush-sheathed walls and ceiling. The building has stood virtually abandoned since the demise of the dairy operations in the 1980s.

129. Milk House  
ca. 1935-1940  
Contributing building

This one-story building is covered with weatherboards and a sheet metal gable front roof. It is similar in finish and plan to the other surviving milk houses on the estate.

130-130a. Pine Top Farm  
ca. 1930; 1937  
One contributing site, one noncontributing building

The site of Pine Top Farm was not a part of the estate shown on the 1896 guide map, but a holding which adjoined it on the west side, and was probably purchased by the turn of the century as Mr. Vanderbilt moved to enlarge the home estate. Whether a farming operation stood here when purchased is not known; however, Pine Top Farm was developed here. A small frame barn, comprising the east half of the present barn, and a metal silo were here and had been in use for some time when plans were prepared in 1937 for essentially doubling the size of the barn, relocating the old silo, erecting a new metal silo, and the construction of a small barn housing a tool shed, horse stalls, and maternity stalls. This expanded barn (#131) with an attached milk house survives; however, the pair of metal silos were subsequently replaced with the present tile and cement panel silos. During its productive life this small dairy farm also included feeding pens and two dwellings for its workers. Since the end of dairying operations at Biltmore in the 1980s, the site has been largely abandoned except for the use of the barn for estate storage. The service building erected in 1937 has been lost; one of the two houses has also been lost and the other, a simple two-story frame house (#130a), long abandoned as a residence and since irreparably damaged by fire, is now a ruin. The acreage around the barn and buildings at Pine Top Farm was historically used for crops, including hay, and pasture. Some of the former pasture has been allowed to grow up; however, other parts have been utilized as planting grounds for the vineyard operations including vines and raspberry and blackberry bushes. The bottomlands are leased for corn production.

131. Barn  
1937  
Contributing building

Although the date of the original barn here, concealed inside the overbuilding and expansion of 1937 which resulted in the present building, is not known, the construction of this barn is among the best documented of the estate's interwar-period agricultural buildings. A three-page letter dated 19 February 1937, from Messrs. Worley and Hawes to Everett D. Mitchell, the manager of Biltmore Dairy Farm, was the proposal to "furnish all the labor, material, appliances and equipment for the alterations and addition to the Main Dairy Barn of Pine Top Farm and the construction of a tool shed, horse stalls, and maternity stalls at Pine Top Farm, in accordance with the plans entitled 'Addition and Alterations Pine Top Farm, designed by Lee Presnell,' and to do all grading necessary in connection therewith, furnishing a complete turnkey job, at the price of \$5,092.71, . . ." Both the proposal and the plans survive in the Biltmore Estate Archives. Leander (Lee) L. Presnell was an employee of the estate dairy in the 1930s and in 1940 identified as a carpenter for the dairy. (Whether the plans

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were drawn by Mr. Presnell, Sr., or his son and namesake, Mr. Presnell, Jr., is unclear.) C.G. Worley and W.N. Hawes had earlier built a worker's cottage on the estate (#85).

The large rectangular gambrel-roof barn, thirty-two feet wide and 120 feet long, stands on a poured concrete foundation, is sheathed with white-painted board and batten, and covered with a sheet-metal roof which projects at the ridge on both ends to protect the "Louden No. 351 Grapple Hay Fork." The concrete foundation wall is higher on the barn's northeast end which formed the original building here. Ground level openings in the center of each end are protected by replacement paired sliding doors, flanked by framed windows holding six-pane sash. Both ends also have large openings in the upper elevation, protected by paired board-and-rail doors for unloading hay, while the northeast end also has a second door opening onto the loft floor. The long sides of the barn are punctuated by symmetrical window openings on each side of a center door opening onto the barn's cross-passage plan. The door on the southeast side opens under a covered walkway linking it with the frame milk house that is sheathed with board and batten and covered with a sheet metal side-gable roof. The interior of the barn has a poured concrete floor, flush sheathed walls and ceiling, and retains portions of its metal stanchions and other fittings supplied by the Loudon company.

132-132a.	Silos 1950	ca. 1937- Two contributing structures
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The proposal submitted in 1937 also specified work in connection with the silos.

We are to remove the present silo to the place indicated by the plans, and install the same on an approved concrete foundation; we are also to provide and install, at the point indicated by the plans, a new all metal silo, 16'9" x 39', on an approved concrete foundation and in accordance with the plans and directions of the manufacturer of the silo.

Whether the metal silos were relocated and built anew, respectively, in 1937 and subsequently replaced by these silos, or whether there was a change in plans and the tile silo was built then and the metal silo later replaced by the cement panel silo is not now known. Nevertheless, the pair of silos now standing are very similar to the pair standing at Plateau Farm (#108): the tile silo has no roof; the cement panel silo is covered with a cement roof with finial. (The overgrown condition of the surrounding feed lot prevented close inspection of the silos; whether the brick blocks are stamped "Pomona" is not known.)

133. Vineyard and Lake  
1979 and afterward  
Noncontributing site

The Biltmore Estate Vineyard began with a test planting of grape vines in an area behind the Conservatory (#26) in 1971, and in 1979 the first plantings were made at this location in Long Valley. Today the vineyard on both sides of the lake, erected for irrigation, covers some 74.3 acres and is planted mostly with vines to produce Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon wine.

134. Field House  
ca. 1980-1985  
Noncontributing building

This small rectangular building, on a concrete pad, sheathed with sheet metal, and covered with a low side-gable metal roof, is used by workers in the vineyard.

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135. Pesticide House  
ca. 1995  
Noncontributing building

The rectangular one-story building was erected for the storage of pesticides used in the vineyard and related equipment. Standing on a concrete pad, it is covered with a tall sheet metal gable roof; the cement block closet for chemicals is parallel with a drive-through garage bay. The upper gable ends of the building are sheathed with sheet metal siding.

136. Pump House and Facilities at Lake  
ca. 1980  
Noncontributing structure

A small concrete-block gable-roof pump house serves the irrigation lines that provide frost protection for the vineyard. Also located nearby are the pens and shed related to a seasonal trout-raising operation.

137. Forest Plantations Overview  
1890-1911

NOTE: The following overview of the historic forest plantations on Biltmore Estate and the descriptions of the plantations, #137a through #137t, were prepared by Bill Alexander, landscape and forest historian, Biltmore Estate.

The magnificent forest that covers more than two-thirds of the Estate's total acreage today continues to be managed as a living testimony to the vision and conservation-mindedness of Frederick Law Olmsted. At a time when America was still relentlessly devastating its forests, Olmsted was enunciating the need to stop the thoughtless destruction and turn to long-term, scientific management of forests as a wise investment for landowners. In the late 1880s, when George W. Vanderbilt had already purchased several thousand acres of mostly denuded land that had been cut-over and burned repeatedly and overgrazed for decades, he called upon Olmsted to advise him on what to do with it. After listening to Vanderbilt's supposition that he might like to make a park of it, Olmsted expressed to his client, "The soil seems to be generally poor. The woods are miserable, all the good trees having again and again been culled out and only runts left. The topography is most unsuitable for anything that can properly be called park scenery." In response to Vanderbilt's question on what could be done with it, Olmsted replied, "Such land in Europe would be made a forest; partly, if it belonged to a gentleman of large means, as a preserve for game, mainly with a view to crops of timber. That would be a suitable and dignified business for you to engage in; it would, in the long run, be probably a fair investment of capital and it would be of great value to the country to have a thoroughly well organized and systematically conducted attempt in forestry made on a large scale. My advice would be to make a small park into which to look from your house; make a small pleasure ground and garden, farm your river bottom chiefly to keep and fatten live stock with a view to manure; and make the rest a forest, improving the existing woods and planting the old fields."

In a letter to his friend, Fred Kingsbury in January, 1891, Olmsted reported, "This advice struck him [Vanderbilt] favorably and after thinking it over several months, he told me that he was prepared to adopt it. Since then I have been giving it practical form and have each division of the scheme in operation. Having a commercial forest in view, he has since added to the property, piece by piece, until now it amounts to quite 6000 acres. We have been forming a nursery for the Estate in which we already have growing 40,000 trees and shrubs and are propagating a much larger number; these for the borders of the roads and home grounds. We



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have planted on the 'old fields' 300 acres of white pine and are preparing schedules of stock for the forest planting and are instructing and breaking in two foremen with small gangs for taking out the poor and dilapidated trees of the existing woods." Olmsted attributed the degraded condition of the existing patchwork parcels of woodland to a variety of reasons. He noted that he had seen the remains of several sawmills on the Estate that must have been at work a good many years, and for those mills, "every tree desirable for any sort of saleable lumber has been felled. What is seen now is the refuse. As is always the case, to get out the best trees, many a little less choice have been felled or broken down and ruined. Of what remained the settlers have taken great numbers for their cabins, fences and fuel. Big fires are the one luxury of the pioneer cabins. Then more have been taken to feed Asheville hearths than you can readily imagine." In the last statement, Olmsted was referring to the local custom of bartering firewood for store goods in town; the firewood, of course, having been taken from the region of the Estate.

Upon the recommendation from Charles Sprague Sargent, Director of the Arnold Arboretum and noted authority on North American trees, Olmsted contracted with Robert J. Douglas, an Illinois nurseryman who specialized in the production of native tree species, to make an inspection of the Estate land in regards to reforestation possibilities. The results of Douglas's examinations and recommendations were incorporated into a comprehensive thirty-six-page report that Olmsted prepared and sent to Mr. Vanderbilt on July 12, 1889. The largest section of the report, sixteen pages, was devoted to describing the condition of the forest along with suggestions for improvements. A subsequent report titled "Project of Operations For Improving The Forest of Biltmore" may very well be one of the earliest written forest management prescriptions in the United States. In the report, Olmsted indicates his awareness of the current situation in forestry on a national level and states that, "The management of forests is soon to be a subject of great national, economic importance, and as the undertaking now to be entered upon at Biltmore will be the first of the kind in the country to be carried on methodically, upon an extensive scale, it is even more desirable than it would otherwise be that it should, from the first, be directed systematically and with clearly defined purposes, and that instructive records of it should be kept." The report contains fairly explicit instructions regarding selective thinning under a variety of situations to improve the forest, as well as instructions for training foremen who would work under the superintendent, Mr. Gall, the resident Landscape Architect and Forester. Besides guidelines for practical forestry improvements, Olmsted encouraged the superintendent to "look ahead . . . for opportunities of forming points of special landscape interest by the development and exhibition of particular trees and groups." This concept for combining practical silviculture with landscape aesthetics was far ahead of generally accepted thought.

After this initial forest management scheme was in place and three hundred acres of old fields had been planted to white pine by Robert Douglas (Douglas Plantations, contributing resources #137 b-d), Olmsted realized that the long-term success of the forestry program would be dependent upon professional guidance by a trained forester. He wrote to George Vanderbilt on the 27th of November, 1891, recommending that he consider hiring Gifford Pinchot as his consulting forester. (Pinchot, at the time, was just beginning his career that would lead him to national acclaim as the first chief of the federal agency that came to be known as the U.S. Forest Service.) Pinchot, if Vanderbilt desired, would make an initial study of the Estate's woodlands, noting the species of trees, growth conditions, densities, quantities of board feet per acre, condition of the soil and forest floor, and silvicultural requirements, etc., and then block out a scheme or permanent plan of operations. Olmsted advised, "If you are to have the benefit of Mr. Pinchot's service in any way, it would undoubtedly be desirable with respect to the forest proper that nothing be done except under his advice. I say this the more confidently because I am satisfied that he would be glad to be identified with the undertaking, look to make his reputation upon it, and serve you with a degree of zeal that you could not expect to obtain from any one else." Vanderbilt was agreeable to Olmsted's recommendation and Pinchot began his work at Biltmore on February 3, 1892. In a report describing what was meant by the term forestry and how forestry applications could be applied

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to benefit both the forest and the landowner, Pinchot stated that the "Biltmore Working Plan" would draw "attention to the fact that there is such a thing in America as forest management. . . . As the first attempt of its kind in the United States, the experiment at Biltmore will have, it is hoped, a distinct national bearing and importance."

The greater part of Pinchot's efforts as Biltmore's forester were devoted to cruising the forests, gathering data, devising the management plan, and supervising improvement thinnings and timber harvests. He also continued the program of converting old farm fields into forest plantations; a notable example is the Approach Road Plantation (#137a).

In 1895 Dr. Carl Alwin Schenck succeeded Pinchot, who left to pursue his career as a consulting forester and by 1898 as the chief of the federal government's Division of Forestry. Schenck was a young forester from Darmstadt, Germany, who was recommended by Sir Dietrich Brandis, an internationally renowned forestry expert and Pinchot's mentor. During his fourteen-year tenure at Biltmore, Schenck devoted a great deal of time and effort to the reforestation of hundreds of acres of old, abandoned farm fields. Through his many experiments with plantations of both hardwoods and conifers, much of the previously abused and exhausted farmland was transformed into productive forests that remain today as living examples of the dawn of scientific forestry in America.

The approximately 4,449 acres that currently make up the forested land of Biltmore Estate constitute the combined legacies of George W. Vanderbilt, Frederick Law Olmsted, Gifford Pinchot, and Dr. Carl A. Schenck. Because the forest at Biltmore has been under continual management since it was established in 1890, it has the distinction of being the oldest, continually managed forest under a written scientific management plan on a large scale in America today. It truly is the "cradle of forestry" in America. The forestry program at Biltmore Estate is a living testimony that land that was once badly abused by the eradication of its forest cover and subsequent subjection to wildfires, over-grazing, and erosion, can be restored and made productive in time through wise management. Through protection from fires, the exclusion of livestock, and improvement thinnings, which culled out low quality trees and allowed the most vigorous and valuable species that remained to grow, the exploited woodland was gradually transformed into a productive forest. Additionally, many acres of worn-out farmland were planted to forest. As recommended and proven by Olmsted, Pinchot, and Schenck, forests could be managed wisely for the long term and produce a return for the landowner.

Today, the forest at Biltmore continues to be managed under the guiding principles established by these men and demonstrates more than a century of sound land stewardship initiated by George W. Vanderbilt. Although there was a substantial acreage of ravaged, wooded parcels that were brought back into productive forests, it was the reestablishment of forest on nearly 3,000 acres of land that was previously cleared, burned, and grazed that warrants special attention and individual entries.

The following sites are the remaining identifiable historic plantations established between 1890 and 1911. The Browntown plantation and other plantings in what is now Biltmore Forest have been lost except for the occasional tree that survives on house lots. The trees in the Old School House plantation on the estate were lost to a cutting.

- 137a. Approach Road Plantation  
1895  
Contributing site

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This plantation is one of the best remaining examples of Gifford Pinchot's reforestation efforts. Although originally planted in the spring of 1895 with only yellow poplar and black cherry, a summer drought in the same year resulted in a forty percent loss of seedlings, and successive plantings of pine resulted in a mixed stand that appears more like a natural forest today.

- 137b-d. Douglas Plantations  
1890  
Three contributing sites

The scattered stands which make up the "Douglas Plantations," so named for Robert Douglas, nurseryman from Illinois who planted them under contract with Olmsted, are, in several respects the most impressive on the estate. Not only are they the oldest of the numerous plantations, but they contain on the whole the largest diameters of planted trees. This is perhaps partly due to the fact that the trees were planted less densely than those of later plantations, and have a slight age advantage. The plantations were made of mostly Eastern white pine, but over time other species have seeded naturally into them. As was originally intended as part of the overall forest management program, successive thinning and selective harvesting has been carried out in these plantations.

- 137e. Brickhouse Plantation  
1890s  
Contributing site

Located on a ridge above archaeological site 31BN692 (#151), this plantation currently comprises predominantly Eastern white pine, although various hardwoods exist mostly on the slopes where deeper soil prevails.

- 137f. Farmcote Plantation  
1905  
Contributing site

Originally a mixed plantation of sugar maple, white pine, and short-leaf pine, this plantation today is an almost pure stand of white pine with many large diameter trees. The fact that no sugar maple survived probably indicates that the site was not suitable for hardwoods when planted. The white pines were apparently more adapted to the specific site characteristics than the short-leaf pines, and in subsequent management thinnings the short-leaf pines were removed.

- 137g. Ferry Farm Plantation  
1890s  
Contributing site

On the north side of Ferry Farm Road, so named because of its proximity to the original location of the estate's lower ferry, this plantation is comprised largely of white pine, although one portion contains a considerable amount of short-leaf pine and white oak. Various successive thinning and harvest operations have occurred over time.

- 137h. Horse Stable Plantation  
1890s  
Contributing site

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Located mostly on a ridge to the northwest of the Horse Stables (#81), this relatively small plantation comprises mostly white pine with scattered hardwoods on the lower slope.

- 137i. Long Ridge Plantation  
1895-1905  
Contributing site

The reforestation of steep slopes of Long Ridge on the south side of the Swannanoa and French Broad rivers near their juncture was one of the first tasks taken on by Dr. Schenck on Biltmore Estate. The land, an old pasture abandoned since about 1875, was extremely steep and largely covered with "beardgrass," which established on poor, infertile sites. On this approximately forty-five-acre site, Schenck made some of his most extensive trials with various tree species. Some thirty kinds, about evenly divided between hardwoods and conifers, were planted over a period of eleven years. As in most of the plantations on such impoverished sites as Long Ridge, the hardwoods had low survivability, and those that did survive did not thrive. However, some pockets of hardwoods persisted on the north facing slopes and substantially on the lower eastern slope. Out of all the various conifers planted, only white pine and short-leaf pine have survived the test of time to the present.

- 137j. Old Orchard Plantation  
1899  
Contributing site

This plantation is perhaps the most historically significant of all of Dr. Schenck's plantations. Planting was begun in 1899 on the site of an abandoned pasture with a badly eroded surface. "Brush wattles" or wickerwork fences were constructed to help check the erosion until the planted seedlings stabilized the slopes. About 50,000 seedling trees were planted, more than half of them pines and the rest hardwoods. The white pine portion of the plantation was chosen for one of the experiments in thinning and its effect on growth characteristics begun by the U.S. Forest Service in cooperation with Biltmore Estate in 1916. Experiments in research plots in the Old Orchard and some other plantations were conducted until about 1970 and provided valuable research material published in several USDA publications and quoted extensively in various articles and forestry textbooks. The research plots in this plantation were re-measured in 1999 by a U.S. Forest Service research scientist, and the observations published in an article for the *Journal of Forestry* in November 2000.

- 137k. Swannanoa Plantation  
1890s  
Contributing site

On a steep northerly slope northeast of the Old Orchard Plantation, the Swannanoa Plantation is one of the older hardwood plantations that was never planted with white pines. Out of the original mix of species (mainly sugar maple, black walnut, butternut, and black cherry), a stand of mostly sugar maple persists today. Scattered other hardwoods such as yellow poplar, black locust, and beech are present mostly in the periphery of the stand.

- 137l-m. Spruce Plantations  
1911  
Two contributing sites

Of the several species of spruce that were planted at Biltmore, the only one that survived the test of time is the Norway spruce. This species was planted in two primary locations near the Approach Road, Swannanoa, and

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Old Orchard plantations around 1911. The plantations continue to grow, although much variability exists due to differences in site characteristics.

- 137n. Lone Chimney Plantation  
Early 1900s  
Contributing site

Located on the west side of the French Broad River, this is one of the surviving plantations of mostly white pine and some short-leaf pine. Various silvicultural treatments have been carried out over time in this and other plantations as part of the continuing forest management program.

- 137o. Persimmon Heights Plantation  
Early 1900s  
Contributing site

A linear, ridge-top stand, Persimmon Heights Plantation is almost a pure stand of white pine and continues to be managed. Its most recent thinning occurred in 1998-99.

- 137p. Apiary Plantation  
1905  
Contributing site

Only a portion (less than one-fourth) of the original Apiary Plantation exists today. The bulk of the stand was harvested during 1988-89 due to decline from insect and disease problems. The remaining portion of white pine contains some of the original research plots set up and studied by the U.S. Forest Service from 1916 to 1970.

- 137q-r. Bent Creek Plantations  
Early 1900s  
Two contributing sites

Adjacent to and on steep slopes above the French Broad River, these stands consist mostly of white pine. Portions of these plantations have had thinning and harvest operations carried out in recent years.

- 137s-t. Brevard Road Plantations  
Early 1900s  
Two contributing sites

These substantial plantations paralleling Brevard Road (NC 191) on the west side of the estate are predominately comprised of white pine and have had various silvicultural programs carried out in them over time, including thinning and harvest operations.

### Archaeological Sites Overview

During the summer of 2000 Biltmore Estate consulted with Appalachian State University Laboratories of Archaeological Science concerning phase I and phase II archaeological investigations on the estate. In at least a few instances, the work agreement was designed to further examine and evaluate archaeological resources previously identified and defined within the boundary of the estate. In other instances archaeological surveys were to be conducted in areas not previously investigated, but for which probability of discovering such resources was considered high. The limited archaeological survey and analysis were completed in the summer

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and early autumn of 2000 by M. Scott Shumate, Patti Evans-Shumate, and Dr. Larry R. Kimball, the principal investigator. A final report was completed and submitted in November 2000. Further archaeological investigation occurred on the estate in 2001. The following entries, #138 through #152, were compiled from the reports for same by Hal Keiner, former archivist and historian, Biltmore Estate. While all are noncontributing resources, in regard to the property's National Historic Landmark significance, as are two sites (#41 and #42) recorded during the architectural survey, they are included to provide a record of the known architectural and archaeological resources at Biltmore Estate. The archaeological sites are potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

138. Davidson House, 31BN695  
ca. 1790  
Noncontributing site

This site is among the older European settlements in western North Carolina. It was here or near here that Col. William Davidson built a house adjacent to Gum Spring, which remains visible nearby. The first meeting of the Buncombe County Court was convened at Davidson's residence on April 16, 1792. Although Davidson's connection to the site is unconfirmed at present, the site warrants additional excavation and research.

139. Patton House, 31BN694  
ca. 1790  
Noncontributing site

This site is connected to the Patton family who settled by 1785 in what was to become Buncombe County. Eventually owning estates of several hundred acres, Col. John Patton and James Patton owned large numbers of slaves. Indeed, James Patton, according to the 1830 census, possessed fifty slaves, making him the county's largest slave-owner. Within the site's bounds a cellar hole is located, most likely associated with the Patton farmhouse that was standing when George Vanderbilt purchased the land. Shovel testing indicates the presence of large amounts of nineteenth-century artifacts.

140. Mound, 31BN174  
Middle Woodland period, 200 B.C.-600 A.D.  
Noncontributing site

The heart of this site is a low mound rising from the surrounding floodplain adjacent to the Swannanoa River. Investigations in the summers of 2000 and 2001 indicate that the mound is an artificial creation; that is, it was built up purposefully to provide a space for ceremonial, civic, or residential purposes. Most of the artifacts recovered suggest that this is a Middle Woodland period site. Excavations completed in 2001 indicate that a number of structures stood here that are significantly larger than any previously found at other Middle Woodland sites in the Southeast. Other lithics and potsherds recovered indicate that a substantial trade had developed between the Native Americans living here and others in the Ohio Valley, in Eastern Tennessee, and along the South Carolina coast.

141. 31BN175  
Late Archaic to Historic period, 3000 B.C.-1900 A.D.  
Noncontributing site

This site contains evidence of early to late Archaic period occupation. Indeterminate Woodland and nineteenth-century artifacts have also been found.

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- 142. Pisgah Village nr. Guest House, 31BN696  
Mississippian period, 1000-1500 A.D.  
Noncontributing site

Preliminary investigations indicate that this site was an important Pisgah phase settlement. The large number of ceramic and lithic artifacts recovered here in the summer of 2000 suggest that full-scale excavation is warranted with the goal of supplementing and perhaps modifying information about the Pisgah phase gained from the nearby Warren Wilson and the Garden Creek Mound #1 sites. Finally, it is possible that this settlement was inhabited at the time of first contact with Europeans. Research suggests that both the DeSoto and Pardo *entradas* passed nearby.

- 143. 31BN12  
Archaic to Historic periods, 7500 B.C.-1900 A.D.  
Noncontributing site

Preliminary investigations have determined that this is a probable village site. Artifacts were found from a wide range of periods and affiliations including the Archaic, Early Woodland, Middle Woodland (Connestee phase), and Historic.

- 144. 31BN176  
Archaic to Historic periods, 7500 B.C.-1900 A.D.  
Noncontributing site

Lithics collected here indicate that area may have been the site of an Archaic period hunting/butchering camp. Other artifacts found date from the Woodland and Historic periods.

- 145. 31BN685  
Archaic to Historic periods, 7500 B.C.-1950 A.D.  
Noncontributing site

Archaic period lithics have been found on this site as well as late nineteenth to mid twentieth century artifacts.

- 146. 31BN177  
Prehistoric, undetermined date  
Noncontributing site

A minor lithic scatter of indeterminate prehistoric origin was found at this site.

- 147. 31BN180  
Archaic, Woodland, Mississippian/Late Woodland periods, 7500 B.C.-ca. 1800  
Noncontributing site

A prehistoric artifact scatter was found on this site with lithics and potsherds dating from indeterminate Archaic; indeterminate Woodland; and Mississippian or Late Woodland (Pisgah and/or Qualla) periods.

- 148. 31BN178  
Mississippian, Historic periods, 1000 A.D.-ca. 1900  
Noncontributing site

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A prehistoric artifact scatter was found on this site with lithics and potsherds dating from the Mississippian (Pisgah) period. An indeterminate Historic period artifact was also discovered.

149. 31BN179  
Archaic, Woodland, Mississippian periods, 7500 B.C.-1500 A.D.  
Noncontributing site

A prehistoric artifact scatter was found on this site with lithics and potsherds dating from the Indeterminate Archaic; Indeterminate Woodland; and probable Mississippian (Pisgah) periods.

150. 31BN693  
Mississippian period, 1000-1500 A.D.  
Noncontributing site

This site is located in the French Broad River floodplain northwest of the Lagoon (#96), a body of water created by Frederick Law Olmsted as a landscape design feature. The site also is near the "War Ford" or "Warrior's Ford," a crossing of the river known to Native Americans and their ancestors and used by General Griffith Rutherford in his campaign against the Cherokee in 1776. During preliminary investigations in 2000, only a few minor artifacts dating from the Mississippian (Pisgah) period were found here. However, this site remains important as further investigations may reveal more precisely the route of General Rutherford's army in 1776.

151. Alexander or Brick Farmhouse, 31BN692  
ca. 1830-ca. 1910  
Noncontributing site

This is the site of a significant house and mill complex dating from the early nineteenth century and associated with the Alexander family, early Buncombe County settlers. After George Vanderbilt's purchase of the property in 1888, the house was remodeled and became a guest house where Vanderbilt, the architect Richard Morris Hunt, and the landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted resided during their visits to oversee construction of Biltmore Estate. The house was a large brick structure, and the mill complex included a grist mill and a saw mill. The house and the mills were removed (house possibly burned) by 1910. Tests at the site indicate that a substantial collection of nineteenth-century artifacts lie buried here.

152. 31BN697  
Late Archaic and Middle Woodland periods, 3000 B.C.-600 A.D.  
Noncontributing site

This site is located along the south bank of the French Broad River in a cleared field in the river's floodplain. During 2000 a Phase I preliminary investigation of the area was carried out through a series of shovel tests. These tests resulted in the recovery of lithic and ceramic artifacts suggesting that the site was occupied during the Late Archaic and Middle Woodland periods.



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Purpose of the NHL Boundary Revision Study: To address and evaluate concerns regarding development on the National Historic Landmark acreage since its original designation in 1963, to review the stewardship and maintenance of the historic property during those years, and to determine if and how changes to the appearance, character, and fabric of the historic property have affected its significance as a National Historic Landmark in the area of Conservation for which it was designated in 1963.

Goal of the Study: To identify a revised boundary, if appropriate, which includes and encloses all of the intact, preserved portion of the original designated acreage that has retained the physical features and definable associative qualities related to its significance in the area of Conservation. This boundary is to be determined independent of changes in ownership or current ownership of the original designated acreage.

### Means of Achieving the Purpose and Meeting the Goal:

1. Review of the existing literature and documentation for the 1963 designation of Biltmore Estate as a National Historic Landmark
2. Review of the division of the estate in 1979 between the two grandsons of George Washington Vanderbilt: George Henry Vanderbilt Cecil; and William Amherst Vanderbilt Cecil
3. Field recording of the property held by The Biltmore Company in 1963 comprising woodlands, fields, waters, agricultural and pleasure grounds, buildings, objects, structures, and historic and non historic features located on the property.
4. Synthesis of the field data with historic documentation and additional research

### Concerns Regarding the Original Designation

1. The designation as a National Historic Landmark in 1963, resulting from a one-day visit (4 December 1962), was likely made without ground inspection of the entire estate.
2. The designation was apparently made without a thorough evaluation and assessment of the historic plantations, the native woodlands, their location, age, and extent.
3. The reliance on secondary sources in the preparation of the original designation report: the bibliography does not cite primary published works, including Ferdinand W. Haasis' valuable work *Forest Plantations at Biltmore, N.C.* (USDA, 1930), Gifford Pinchot's *Breaking New Ground* (1947), nor, most importantly, Carl Alwin Schenck's *Cradle of Forestry in America: The Biltmore Forest School, 1898-1913* (1955).
4. The valuable role of classroom and field study in the conduct of the Biltmore Forest School in Pisgah Forest was not addressed, nor were the Pisgah Forest lands included in the designation.
5. The short analysis of the Biltmore Forest School is inadequate. Established by Carl Schenck, its classroom and lecture instruction was first held in the estate office building from 1898 to 1902, and afterward conducted in a building erected for that purpose adjoining the nursery operations on the north side of the Swannanoa River from 1902 to the final estate-based sessions in 1909. The 1902 building no longer exists and its site passed out of ownership by the Vanderbilt family in 1917.
6. The National Park Service does not have a map of the acreage designated in 1963, nor, apparently, was any map prepared; nor was the actual boundary of the NHL acreage established.

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7. The original designation failed to consider the totality of the property's significance in American history and in obvious areas beyond conservation. It did not address the significance of Biltmore Estate in the history of American society, particularly the lifeways of the Gilded Age; the significance of Biltmore Estate in the history of landscape architecture in America, particularly its association with the life and career of Frederick Law Olmsted, the foremost landscape architect of nineteenth-century America; nor the significance of Biltmore Estate in the history of American architecture, particularly its association with the life and career of Richard Morris Hunt, a founder and president of the American Institute of Architects, for whom the mansion and other buildings designed by him, his office, and his son represent the most important such surviving buildings in the United States.

This study was conducted with a two-fold thesis: (1) that the possible (and likely) boundary reduction be made on the basis of the original acreage's significance and retention of integrity in the area of conservation; and (2) that the resulting boundary accurately reflect Biltmore Estate's larger historic significance as a National Historic Landmark in the areas of conservation, social history, architecture, and landscape architecture. To that end, this study provides documentation and justification for a reduction of the National Historic Landmark boundary to the residual estate lands, assigned in 1979 to The Biltmore Company and William A.V. Cecil, and the State of North Carolina (I-40 path through the estate) and for the addition of social history, landscape architecture, and architecture as areas of National Historic Landmark significance, to be considered and acted upon in conjunction with the proposed reduction of the National Historic Landmark boundary for Biltmore Estate and Biltmore Forestry School Site.

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The reduction of the National Historic Landmark boundary for Biltmore Estate and Biltmore Forestry School Site is based on the following four considerations.

- A. The alienation of lands from the Biltmore Estate in the period since 1963. This factor involves both the legal separation of tracts through sale and division; and changes in the character, appearance, and use of these removed lands since 1963 that alter their integrity and compromise their significance as contributing features to the National Historic Landmark in the area of conservation.
- B. The changed character of forestry management practices and maintenance of woodlands on the lands received by George H.V. Cecil and Biltmore Dairy Farms, Inc., in 1979.
- C. The sale of property and the commercial and residential development of other former Biltmore Estate lands devised to George H.V. Cecil in 1979.
- D. The existence of virtually all of the surviving resources of Biltmore Estate, which contribute to its significance as a National Historic Landmark in the area of conservation, on the residual estate now held by The Biltmore Company and West Range, LLC, together with all of the same and related resources (except one) that contribute to Biltmore Estate's NHL significance in the areas of social history, architecture, and landscape architecture.

### A. The Alienation of Lands From the Biltmore Estate in the Period Since 1963.

The diminution of Biltmore Estate, which reached its apogee in extent at the turn of the century (totaling over 100,000 acres), occurred at two critical points in its history. At both times, 1914-1921 and 1979, sales and the division of land were associated with the death of members of the Vanderbilt family. Between these events, the

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paths of three roadways, the Blue Ridge Parkway, Interstate 40, and Interstate 26, were routed through the estate grounds, and a right-of-way was granted for the erection of a major electric transmission line. All of these actions contributed to the creation of the residual estate of 6,825 acres now held by William Amherst Vanderbilt Cecil, his two children, and their spouses, that comprises the important buildings and grounds that were the focus of the renown collaboration of George Washington Vanderbilt, Frederick Law Olmsted, and Richard Morris Hunt in the closing years of the nineteenth century.

The first reduction occurred in the period from 1914 to 1921 and followed on the death of George Washington Vanderbilt (1862-1914), who had held off a financial reckoning through the rental of the Vanderbilt mansion at 640 Fifth Avenue in New York City to Henry Clay Frick, the sale of his most valuable Rembrandt works to J.P. Morgan, by living abroad, and through certain economies on the estate and at his summer house in Maine. With the collapse of timber prices following the panic of 1907 and the inability to generate significant income through timber sales, Mr. Vanderbilt encouraged Carl Schenck in 1908 to negotiate the sale of his vast Pisgah Forest lands. That effort came to naught, but the underlying financial tensions led to Mr. Schenck's dismissal in 1909 and the sale of commercial timber rights to some 68,000 acres in Pisgah Forest in the fall of 1912.

None of these measures, among others, could forestall the inevitable after Mr. Vanderbilt's death on 6 March 1914. By the end of May 1914, Mrs. Edith Stuyvesant Vanderbilt and Frederick Vanderbilt, executors of Mr. Vanderbilt's estate, had reached an agreement with the United States Forest Commission for the sale of Pisgah Forest, comprising 86,700, for \$433,851. A series of deeds conveying this acreage to the United States of America were executed up to 1921.

Following the famous flood of 1916, which effectively destroyed the estate's horticultural operations adjoining the Swannanoa River, the estate acreage on the north side of the river including the Biltmore Forest School classroom building was sold in February 1917 to the Georgia Industrial Realty Company (Southern Railroad).

Two other important sales of Biltmore Estate lands, both occurring in 1920, further diminished the extent of the home estate. In June 1920 Biltmore Village, the manorial village situated just outside the entrance lodge, was sold to the Stephens family. In October a larger tract of 1,461.32 acres lying in very close proximity to the mansion, between it and US 25, was conveyed to the Biltmore Estate Company (later the Biltmore Forest Holding Company) and developed as Biltmore Forest, an important planned residential community designed in conjunction with the Biltmore Forest Country Club.

The construction of three important public roadways through the estate in the third quarter of the twentieth century began with the routing of the Blue Ridge Parkway in the early 1950s. The road bed and adjacent rights of way, conveyed in 1956, occupied approximately 308 acres in its generally east/west path across the south center of the holding, through woodlands, fields, and across waters not accessible to the public that had been visiting the estate as paying guests since 1930. The routing of Interstate 40 through the estate in the early 1960s was more controversial. Finally, a route nearest the north edge of the estate, closely paralleling its border along the Swannanoa River, was selected. Its east/west path and adjoining rights of way occupy approximately 124.48 acres. At its crossing above the Approach Road the towering piers supporting the elevated roadway are enhanced with stone masonry to mitigate the visual effect on the Approach Road and visitors arriving on it. A like treatment was effected where the interstate highway crosses over Wendover Road, the principal exit for visitors to the property. The piers were left unmasked where they support the highway's path above the Service Road (now also used by the public). A third major intrusion on the estate came with the construction of Interstate 26, nearly contemporaneous with the building of Interstate 40, through the southwest corner of the estate (see #BB). Its route, carrying around the northeast edge of the Arrowhead Peninsula and then southeasterly across the neck of the peninsula to exit the estate along the east bank of the French Broad River,

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and attendant rights of way comprises approximately 189.25 acres. Its intrusive physical appearance is in no way mitigated. The acreage for both interstate highways was conveyed in 1964. A fourth intrusion, the transmission line for the Carolina Power and Light Company (now Progress Energy), was erected on a 100-foot-wide right of way carrying through the west edge of the Arrowhead Peninsula and an isolated triangular tract at the extreme south edge of the estate south/southwest of Interstate 26 and the French Broad River (see #Z). This right of way occupies about 24.50 acres. Altogether, the paths of the Blue Ridge Parkway, Interstate 26, and the power line right of way occupy approximately 521.75 acres.

The second major, death-related reduction in the size of Biltmore Estate came in 1979, sixteen years after its designation as a National Historic Landmark. At his death in 1914, George Vanderbilt left as his heir a daughter, Cornelia (1900-1976) who would successively marry John Francis Amherst Cecil, Vivian Francis Bulkeley-Johnson, and William Goodsir. After 1932 she lived the remainder of her life abroad, dying in England on 8 February 1976. Meanwhile in the early 1950s, her eldest son, George H.V. Cecil (b. 1925), returned to the estate and assumed a role in its management. In 1960 William A.V. Cecil (b. 1928), Mr. Vanderbilt's second grandson, returned to the estate and joined in the management. (John F.A. Cecil (1900-1954) died in 1954. Edith Stuyvesant (Dresser) Vanderbilt Gerry, the widow of George Vanderbilt died in 1958.

Although Cornelia Vanderbilt Goodsir had long since given up any legal claim to Biltmore Estate, having exchanged her interest in her inheritance for cash payments, her death in 1976 eliminated any possible legal challenge to the estate's assets and its ownership. It also enabled the brothers to negotiate a division of Biltmore Estate and its assets to their mutual advantage. On 30 July 1979 this division became official. The principal asset, the vast acreage of Biltmore Estate, was divided into two unequal halves using as the dividing line the publicly-owned paths of the Blue Ridge Parkway and Interstate 26 that had already separated the estate into two major holdings. The lands lying north of these roadways and their junction in the neck of the Arrowhead Peninsula, including the site and setting of the mansion and all of the important surviving historic estate buildings except one ca. 1920 log cabin (see #W) remained the property of The Biltmore Company and in the ownership of William A.V. Cecil. His share also included the estate office in Biltmore Village. The lands lying south of the parkway and interstate highway, together with other outlying lands and the assets of the Biltmore Dairy, were conveyed to Biltmore Dairy Farms, Inc., and its owner George H.V. Cecil.

In and of itself, this division of the then residual lands of the Biltmore Estate in 1979, and the change in ownership, do not constitute a justification for the reduction of the NHL boundary. However, the effects of the division force just such a reduction. Although this author has not had access to the documents leading to the division and attendant financial calculations, a review of the acreage, the known assets, and the manner of the division clearly indicates both George and William Cecil had long appreciated the development potential of the removed lands lying south of the parkway and Interstate 26 as a major asset of the estate. And each surely foresaw, as negotiations advanced to a conclusion through the late 1970s, the general outline of the development that has followed since the division. In retrospect their appreciation of the value of this property, covered by native woodlands and fields, was based on historical fact. In all of the 5,000 or so acres assigned to George Cecil, there was only one historic forest plantation (see #DD), a lot of perhaps twenty-five to fifty acres established on the Rice Place by Carl Schenck, that was associated with the history of the estate's forestry management initiatives and related to its NHL significance in the area of conservation. It appears on a map (see #GG) that was published in Ferdinand W. Haasis' *Forest Plantations at Biltmore, North Carolina* in 1930 by the United States Department of Agriculture. The Rice Place plantation was located between present day Schenck Parkway and Interstate 26, west of the premises now occupied by Volvo International and WLOS television Station.

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In practical terms, the acreage assigned to Biltmore Dairy Farms, Inc., and George Cecil had been held in reserve for many years, mostly underutilized and enjoying relatively little attention. Although George Cecil had received Biltmore Dairy and its assets, his assigned acreage included but one important dairy farm, Westerly Farm, of the near dozen then operated by Biltmore on the estate. By agreement, these dairy farms were to continue in operation into the 1980s. Whether the sale of Biltmore Dairy and the dispersal of the estate's eighty-three-year-old herd was a foregone conclusion at the time of the division is unclear; it occurred, however, in relatively short order. The Westerly Farm lands, located in the south corner of NC 191 and Interstate 26, were sold with the herd dispersal and the sale of the dairy; the farm site soon became the location of Biltmore Square Mall. Except for Westerly Farm, there was little activity on the lands assigned to George Cecil aside from the aforementioned ca. 1920 log house, a second log house, and a small frame dwelling, both one story, abandoned, and now ruinous, and a couple of agricultural outbuildings. The ca. 1920 log house continues to be occupied and maintained.

How stewardship was exercised on the native woodland section of the estate devised to George Cecil during the period from 1963 to 1979 is unclear. So, too, is the manner in which it was attended in the years preceding the designation. In 1963 Horace J. Sheely Jr., the author of the original NHL designation report, wrote "Today the Biltmore Forests are being harvested on a sustained yield basis consistent with the best ideas of modern forestry." However, it is unclear whether his statement, clearly applicable to the historic plantations, also applied to all the much larger native woodlands on the estate. He does not identify the extent of the historic forestry plantations at Biltmore or their location, nor does he otherwise differentiate between the plantations first established by Robert Douglas and later by Mr. Pinchot, Mr. Schenck, and Chauncey Beadle and the native woodlands that comprise a much larger percentage of the wooded acreage on the estate.

In the event, the division of the estate in 1979 effectively ended any long-term forest management on the lands now owned by George Cecil. Shortly thereafter, the portion of the property first slated for development as Biltmore Park, now the scene of the earliest, most intensive commercial and residential development, experienced a real estate cutting to remove the merchantable timber. Since then about two-thirds of the remaining acreage has been systematically treated to a diameter-limit (or like) cutting to remove merchantable timber. Two remaining acreages are as yet uncut. One lies on the north side of Ducker Mountain, facing the estate, where development is planned, and the other is a woodland wedge in the south half of the Arrowhead Peninsula, between the parkway and the French Broad River, which has recently been marked by a consultant forester for future harvesting. While a degree of care is exercised in all of these cuttings, to preserve the value of the harvested timber, and to lessen any damage to smaller trees that will either grow out for a future cutting or be reserved on lots to appeal to future buyers, decisions are geared to the future development of the entire property. The integrity of these woodlands as contributing resources to the NHL significance of the estate in the area of conservation has been lost to the practice of short-term forestry management as have the associations with long-term scientific forestry management that has distinguished efforts on the residual estate.

B. The Changed Character of Forestry Management Practices and Maintenance of Woodlands on the Lands Received by George H.V. Cecil and Biltmore Farms, Inc., in 1979

As discussed above, the future use and development of the property assigned to George Cecil in the 1979 division, prescribed by the terms of the division agreement, prompted a change in the stewardship of these removed lands. With virtually all of the buildable acreage slated for future development, the eventual sale of the property became a governing factor in decisions concerning the native woodlands and their maintenance. This applied as well to the maintenance of existing roads, the creation of new roads and trails for logging purposes, the identification of loading and staging areas for timber removal, the preservation of wetlands along the French

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Broad River, and the reservation of certain small stands of mature trees for their ornamental value and appeal to future investors and lot buyers.

Precisely when a shift in view was effected is unclear, but it probably occurred in the later 1970s as negotiations were advancing to settlement and the brothers anticipated the terms of the division. Whatever the case, the transition from long-term to short-term forestry certainly occurred in 1979-1980 when decisions on the first phases of development were implemented. The earliest harvesting of merchantable timber occurred in the extreme southern portion of the property assigned to George Cecil, in the area immediately north of Long Shoals Road that has been developed as Biltmore Park. Current photographs (see #CC and EE) in this area indicate a combination of clear-cutting and real-estate cutting was effected. The areas planned for roadways and commercial development were essentially clear cut and nearly all trees removed from the property, while the larger residential areas, where the retention of varying-size trees was desirable for aesthetic purposes and buyer-appeal, received a real-estate cut. In both instances virtually all of the trees with commercial value were removed.

The harvesting of merchantable timber on the lands held by George Cecil has been phased over the past two decades or so in a process like that practiced on other large native woodland holdings in the Appalachians. It is scheduled according to three general factors whose order of priority may change owner to owner: the maturity of timber; proposed new uses for property; and a need for profit from commercial timbering. The first two considerations have governed the cutting here. As discussed above, the first harvesting of timber occurred in the area developed as Biltmore Park and labeled as such on the 2002-2003 map. During the period from 1991 to 1993, the timber in four delineated tracts surrounding the Lance Tract Inholding, totaling 336.76 acres, was subject to a diameter-limit cut. Then, in 1995 and 1996 a diameter-limit cut was completed on another three tracts totaling 334.42 acres in this eastern half (east of Interstate 26) of George Cecil's property. Included in this cutting was the harvesting of timber in the Rice Place plantation, planted by Carl Schenck in the early twentieth century, of some twenty-five to fifty acres (see #DD).

A further major timber harvesting occurred in the years from 1997 to 2000 when virtually all of the merchantable timber was removed from the north half of the Arrowhead Peninsula, above the Blue Ridge Parkway and east of the power right of way. Conducted in four phases, this cutting covered 390.56 acres. The most recent cutting, in 2002-2003, occurred in the western wedge of land bounded by the power right of way on the east, the parkway on the north, and the French Broad River on the west.

At present, two sizeable tracts of Biltmore Farms, Inc.'s lands remain uncut. One tract lies on the north face of Ducker Mountain and comprises acreage believed to have been largely clear-cut in the 1950s and now planned to be developed. The second parcel lies in the south half of the Arrowhead Peninsula, south of the Blue Ridge Parkway and east of the power line right of way; it has recently been marked for a diameter-limit cut of merchantable timber. When this proposed cutting is effected, only one tract will not have been the subject of short-term forestry since 1979.

The differences in long-term and short-term forest management programs are reflected in both the health and appearance of the woodlands on the residual estate and those of Biltmore Farms, Inc., respectively. On Biltmore Estate's 6,825 acres, where long-term and sustainable forestry is its goal, The Biltmore Company applies a selection system to its woodland management. As a

means of continually improving forest stands only a percentage of the mature, commercially valuable trees and many low-grade trees are selected for removal in each harvest operation. In "over-stocked" stands, thinning operations are carried out to remove the poorest trees and to give more room for the best ones to grow and

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develop to maturity. Over time these practices have resulted in improved, sustainable forest stands and provided for cycles of harvest at intervals of fifteen to twenty years. The Biltmore Estate woodlands have a healthy mix of young, middle-age, and mature trees and have a multi-generational appearance.

In timber harvest operations on most of the remaining forestlands held by Biltmore Farms, Inc., different criteria have been used to select trees for removal. With future plans for the sale or development of this acreage, Biltmore Farms does not hold long-term forestry as a primary goal. Instead, typically, most or all of the commercially merchantable trees in a stand are marked and removed during harvest operations, leaving only a minimal number of mature trees for regeneration. This method of harvesting, invariably known as a "diameter-limit cut" or "high grading," generally results in a degradation of stand quality after the harvest. Depending on the age, species composition, and quality of the remaining trees, significant commercial harvest in such woodlands does not prove feasible on the usual fifteen- to twenty-year cycle. The appearance of these woodlands has a sameness in the age, quality, and character of their tree stock.

C. The Sale of Property and the Commercial and Residential Development of Other Former Biltmore Estate Lands Conveyed to George H.V. Cecil and Biltmore Farms, Inc., in 1979

From the National Historic Landmark designation in 1963 until the death of Cornelia Vanderbilt Goodsir in 1976, the boundary of Biltmore Estate had remained largely intact. Following the construction of Interstate 40, a parcel of land in the northwest corner of the estate, forming an irregular projection, was conveyed to the State of North Carolina in 1975 and became the site of the Western North Carolina Farmers's Market. This acreage had formerly been a part of the Inanda Farm whose residence, barn, and milk house survive nearby on the residual estate. However, after Mrs. Goodsir's death and the division of the jointly-held lands in 1979, outlying portions of the estate were sold in tandem with the development occurring around the edges of George Cecil's principal holding. The land lying on the west side of Interstate 26 and north of the French Broad River was sold. The acreage of the Westerly Farm was sold and developed as Ridgefield Park and Biltmore Square Mall. The majority of an odd-shaped tract lying on the northwest side of the French Broad River and west of Interstate 26 was conveyed to the Buncombe County Water Authority. An isolated comma-shaped wooded parcel flanking Bent Creek Church remains in Mr. Cecil's ownership, as does a small triangular-shaped tract in the north corner of the intersection of Long Shoals and Clayton roads that is bisected by the power line right of way.

George Cecil and the management of Biltmore Farms, Inc., have concentrated their principal commercial and residential development in the southern portion of his property, in the area accessible from Long Shoals Road and its intersection with Interstate 26. To ease access to this property and provide a convenient outlet for the future development of all of the lands here, a quadrangular-shaped parcel was acquired. Schenck Parkway (see #CC) was laid out and built as the principal artery of the existing development and as a thoroughfare by which access to the as-yet undeveloped lands, on the north face of Ducker Mountain and in the Arrowhead Peninsula, is to be gained. At present about 600 acres have been platted, sold, and developed. Street building and surveying of additional lots following the current pattern of curvilinear streets and cul de sacs is continuing apace at the edges of the development shown on the map based on aerial photographs shot in early spring 2002.

D. The Existence of Virtually All of the Surviving Resources of Biltmore Estate, Which Contribute to its Significance as a National Historic Landmark in the Area of Conservation, on the Residual Estate Now Held by The Biltmore Company and West Range, LLC, Together With All (except one) of the Same and Related Resources that Contribute to Biltmore Estate's NHL Significance in the Areas of Social History, Architecture, and Landscape Architecture

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As stated in the opening paragraph of this integrity statement, the purpose of this study is to address and evaluate concerns regarding development on the National Historic Landmark acreage since its original designation in 1963, to review the stewardship and maintenance of the historic property during the past four decades, and to determine if and how changes to the appearance, character, and fabric of the historic property have affected its NHL significance in the area of conservation. This study has advanced through extensive fieldwork and research in the Biltmore Estate Archives and elsewhere and a revised boundary has been identified.

Through this long process one particular work, Dr. Schenck's *Cradle of Forestry in America*, remained a valuable source of information concerning the operation of the Biltmore Forest School. Oddly, despite its publication in 1955, seven years prior to Mr. Sheely's visit to the estate, it is not cited in his bibliography. In fact, his bibliography lists secondary sources rather than primary ones. Near the end of a long life as a pioneer in American forestry, Dr. Carl Alwin Schenck (1868-1955) produced a manuscript recounting the history of the Biltmore Forest School and his role as its founder. His historical memoir represents his experience as the first resident forester on the estate from the time of his arrival in 1895, on the recommendation of Gifford Pinchot, until the close of his association with Mr. Vanderbilt in 1909-1910. In it he gives generous professional credit to Mr. Pinchot and particularly to Frederick Law Olmsted, who first brought forester Robert Douglas to the estate, and who, in turn, recommended Mr. Pinchot to Mr. Vanderbilt. It was Mr. Douglas who planted the first forest plantations on the worn soil of the estate in about 1890. As far as can be determined Mr. Pinchot, in his short tenure as estate forester, beginning in February 1892, and afterward as forestry consultant to Mr. Vanderbilt, was responsible for but one forest plantation on the grounds designated in 1963 as a National Historic Landmark. This was a small plantation on the east side of the Approach Road (#137a) that proved unsuccessful and was later overplanted by Mr. Schenck. Mr. Pinchot's only known involvement with the portion of the estate set apart in 1979 to Biltmore Dairy Farms, Inc., came in 1894 when he supervised a systematic cutting of native, low-grade timber on the Arrowhead Peninsula as part of his effort to convince Mr. Vanderbilt that profits were indeed possible from forest management. Mr. Pinchot's principal activities were focused on the vast Pisgah Forest lands and the legendary Pink Beds that he encouraged Mr. Vanderbilt to purchase. Gifford Pinchot recounted these efforts in his own autobiography, *Breaking New Ground*, published in 1947. Oddly, this first-person account is also missing from Mr. Sheely's bibliography.

Written at the end of Schenck's life and published the year of his death, *Cradle of Forestry in America: The Biltmore Forest School, 1898-1913* remains the most important and comprehensive account of the school and forestry operations on the estate up to 1909. (It was reprinted in 1974 and again in 1998.) Seven years later, in 1916, the United States Forest Service established research plots on the estate which they continue to monitor. Later, following the establishment of the Appalachian Forest Experiment Station in 1921, Ferdinand W. Haasis, an employee of the station, undertook detailed research and field survey of the forest plantations and research plots on Biltmore Estate. The result was *Forest Plantations At Biltmore, N.C.* published by the Government Printing Office for the United States Department of Agriculture in January 1930. Included in its pages was a map of the Forest Plantations at Biltmore (see #GG). Only one historic forest plantation appears on the land conveyed to George Cecil and Biltmore Farms, Inc. It is the Schenck-era plantation at the Rice Place that stood in the area between present-day Schenck Parkway and Interstate 26 and has seen encroachment by Interstate 26 and commercial development as well as a diameter cutting (see #DD).

Today, only one contributing historic resource, an occupied ca. 1920 log cabin on Racquet Club Road, stands on the property conveyed to George Cecil in 1979. The intact historic forest plantations, planted and managed since the 1890s according to scientific principles and a long-term plan, the native woodlands likewise the subject of long-term stewardship, and the Biltmore Estate office, where Dr. Schenck operated the classroom component of the Biltmore Forest School from its founding in 1898 into 1902, all of which contribute to the



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National Historic Landmark significance of Biltmore Estate and the Biltmore Forestry School Site, stand on the residual estate owned by The Biltmore Company (William A.V. Cecil) and West Range, LLC (Mr. Cecil Jr. and Mrs. Pickering). Here, together with the mansion designed by Richard Morris Hunt, the grounds, gardens, and landscape features designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, and numerous other domestic, agricultural, and horticultural buildings and outbuildings, they comprise an extraordinary historic property without equal in the history of conservation, architecture, landscape architecture, and social history in the United States.

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:  
 Nationally: X Statewide:    Locally:   

Applicable National  
 Register Criteria:

A X B X C X D

Criteria Considerations  
 (Exceptions):

A    B    C    D    E    F    G

NHL Criteria:

1, 2, 4, 5

NHL Theme(s):

III. Expressing Cultural Values  
     5. Architecture, landscape architecture  
 III. Expressing Cultural Values  
     6. Popular and traditional culture  
 VII. Transforming the Environment  
     1. Manipulating the environment and its resources  
 VII. Transforming the Environment  
     3. Protecting and preserving the environment

Areas of Significance:

Architecture  
 Conservation  
 Landscape Architecture  
 Social History

Period(s) of Significance:

1888-1950

Significant Dates:

1888, 1890, 1895, 1914, 1932, 1950

Significant Person(s):

Hunt, Richard Morris  
 Olmsted, Frederick Law  
 Pinchot, Gifford  
 Schenck, Carl Alwin  
 Vanderbilt, George Washington

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Beadle, Chauncey Delos  
 Hadlow, William T.  
 Hawes, W.N.  
 Bitter, Karl  
 Hunt, Richard Howland  
 Hunt, Richard Morris  
 Lawrence, Washington Gillette  
 Lord, Anthony

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Olmsted, Frederick Law  
Olmsted Brothers  
Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot  
Ponder, E.A.  
Parker, Charles N.  
Smith, Richard Sharp  
Smith & Carrier  
Weeks, D.C.  
Worley, C.G.

**Historic Contexts:**

Architecture  
Conservation of Natural Resources  
Landscape Architecture  
Social History

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### State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

#### Summary Statement of Significance

Born of the extravagance of the Gilded Age and the indulgence of a wealthy scion of one of America's most famous families, and reflecting the culminating, collaborative efforts of both the nation's greatest architect and landscape architect of the nineteenth century, Biltmore Estate is a place of unique and extraordinary significance in the history of the United States. Comprising 6,949.48 acres, the estate is the residual holding of a vast domain established by George Washington Vanderbilt (1862-1914) in the closing decades of the nineteenth-century that once encompassed over 100,000 acres in four counties in western North Carolina. Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1963 under the style "Biltmore Estate and Biltmore Forestry School Site," the estate was described as the "Home of Conservation" in the United States and cited for its significance as the location of the first school of forestry in the country. Its formative association with the careers of both Gifford Pinchot (1865-1946) and Dr. Carl Alwin Schenck (1868-1955), pioneers in the modern forest conservation movement in America, was also noted.

At the time of the designation the estate comprised approximately 12,000 acres and constituted the patrimony held jointly by the two grandsons of Mr. Vanderbilt: George Henry Vanderbilt Cecil (b. 1925), and William Amherst Vanderbilt Cecil (b. 1928). In 1979 the estate and its assets were divided between these men. Biltmore House, the mansion erected as its seat, together with its related, historic domestic, agricultural, and horticultural outbuildings and structures, gardens, managed forest plantations, fields, woodlands, and watercourses, were retained intact, together with the entire acreage lying north of the paths of the Blue Ridge Parkway and Interstate 26. This residual estate of 6,825 acres then became the property of The Biltmore Company and William Amherst Vanderbilt Cecil.

George Washington Vanderbilt, the youngest son of William Henry Vanderbilt (1821-1885) and the grandson of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794-1877)--both of whom were probably the richest men in the United States at their deaths, began acquiring property near Asheville, North Carolina, through agents in May 1888. At the same time he opened discussions with both Richard Morris Hunt and Frederick Law Olmsted concerning the design of a country house, to be used in winter, and its grounds of several thousand acres. This project soon swelled into the construction of the largest private residence ever built in the United States, while the grounds were enlarged through sustained purchase to encompass over 100,000 acres. The collaboration of Messrs. Vanderbilt, Hunt, and Olmsted enjoyed a rapport, unique to this project, by which a remarkable synthesis of architecture and landscape architecture came into existence and produced a building and a landscape that are arguably the greatest surviving, most intact works of Hunt and Olmsted, respectively, to survive into the twenty-first century.

George Vanderbilt's pleasure in this foremost example of America's Gilded Age, described by Henry James, a guest in February 1905, as an "extraordinary colossal French chateau . . . and a thing of the high Rothschild manner," was short lived. The house was little used by his widow Edith Stuyvesant (Dresser) Vanderbilt (1873-1958) and their only child Cornelia Vanderbilt (1900-1976) until her marriage in 1924 to John Francis Amherst Cecil (1890-1954). After the birth of two sons, Cornelia Vanderbilt Cecil's marriage, like that of her cousin Consuelo's to the Duke of Marlborough, failed. She departed America to live the remainder of her life abroad, and the estate was placed in trust under The Biltmore Company in 1932.

The survival of Biltmore Estate, through vicissitudes that would otherwise have caused this great house and its grounds to suffer a bitter end, came through the collaborative efforts of the second important trio in its history.

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Chauncey Delos Beadle (1866-1950) came to the estate on Olmsted's recommendation in 1890, gained Mr. Vanderbilt's favor, and served as superintendent of Biltmore Estate from ca. 1904 until retiring in 1945. Edith Stuyvesant Dresser married Mr. Vanderbilt in Paris in 1898, became the mother of his only child in 1900, and remained his widow until 1925 when she married Senator Peter Goelet Gerry (1879-1957) of Rhode Island. Junius Green Adams (1884-1962), an attorney, became a trusted advisor to Mrs. Vanderbilt after her husband's death, and in 1932 began his tenure as resident president of The Biltmore Company. All three served as trustees of The Biltmore Company and played critical roles in preserving Biltmore Estate, particularly in the 1930s and 1940s, when they oversaw the opening of the estate to the public, with Mrs. Cecil, and the buildup of the estate dairy operations that sustained its financial fortunes. Their work was effectively completed by the end of the 1940s. Chauncey Beadle's demise in 1950 was both the end of an era and the death-knell to their collaboration. Mrs. Gerry would live on in Providence, Rhode Island. Mr. Adams would likewise remain in residence at Woodcote, which he prevailed in renaming Farmcote, until his own death in 1962. But the die, in regard to Biltmore House, had been cast by their actions leading up to 1950. Their mutual commitment to this place, described by Frederick Law Olmsted in a letter to his office partners on 1 November 1893, as "the most distinguished private place, not only of America, but of the world, forming at this period," had accomplished its goal.

While George Vanderbilt's Biltmore Estate marked the height of Gilded Age ambition, it also stands as a landmark at the forefront of the American Country House movement. By no coincidence it is the first great place discussed in the two important studies of the American country house published in 1990, and the cornerstone from which both scholars, Clive Aslet and Mark Alan Hewitt, proceed to address the important, unprecedented, and since unequalled series of houses and estates created in the United States in the decades leading up to World War II. Unlike the great majority of those places which have long since passed into the hands of others, been acquired by local, state, and federal agencies or private institutions and used for a variety of museum, administrative, and educational purposes, and altered, otherwise diminished, or lost, Biltmore Estate remains the property of George Washington Vanderbilt's grandson. The boundary of the 6,825-acre residual estate today bears important comparison to the home estate represented on the "Guide Map of Biltmore Estate" produced by Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot in 1896. Except for the separation of the Arrowhead Peninsula, and lesser adjustments reflecting purchases or sales subsequent to 1896, the core of the home estate has been held intact.

This additional documentation and boundary reduction addresses the larger significance of Biltmore Estate as a National Historic Landmark through the development of its importance in the social history of the United States and the lifeways of the Gilded Age, and in the areas of architecture and landscape architecture, III. Expressing Cultural Values 5 and 6. It also provides further documentation for Biltmore Estate's significance in the areas of conservation and preservation, VII. Transforming the Environment 1 and 3. It justifies the reduction of the National Historic landmark boundary to the residual estate of 6,825 acres together with 124.48 acres that are occupied by the roadbed and rights of way of Interstate 40 that transverses the northern edge of the estate. The total acreage is 6,949.48 acres.

The period of significance, supported by this additional documentation, begins in 1888 and ends in 1950. During this period, Biltmore Estate was created and occupied by George Washington Vanderbilt until his untimely death in 1914, was held in trust until his only child and heir Cornelia came of age, and was again placed in trust under The Biltmore Company, in 1932. The stewardship of the estate in the thirty-six years following the death of Mr. Vanderbilt, including opening the house to the public in 1930 on the model seen in England and the building up of the estate dairy operations that had been established in 1896, has been a model of estate preservation in America. It has assured the continuous ownership of Biltmore Estate in the Vanderbilt-

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Cecil family, a circumstance shared by few great families and their estates, including the Rockefeller Family and Kykuit, when most of their contemporaries have suffered tragic fates.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, INCORPORATING CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

### Introduction

On 14 November 1862 when George Washington Vanderbilt was born at New Dorp, Staten Island, New York, he became the last of nine children born of William Henry and Maria Louisa (Kissam) Vanderbilt. Not unexpectedly, he was named for his father's youngest brother, George Washington Vanderbilt (1839-1863) who would die in Paris the next year, of malaria contracted while serving in the Civil War. The elder George Vanderbilt had been the pride of his father, Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794-1877), and on him rested much of the family's ambition. As the last-born of the eight surviving children of William Henry Vanderbilt, the younger George Vanderbilt found certain expectations placed on him as well. In contrast to his older brothers, he did not go into the family businesses; instead, he remained at home, a companion to his aging parents, until after his mother's death in 1896. He did not marry until 1898. Although he inherited a smaller fortune than his male siblings, he succeeded in creating an estate that is an unparalleled landmark in the history of American architecture and landscape architecture.

Biltmore Estate survives today as the most important of the series of major houses and estates created by his family to remain in the personal ownership of his descendants, the property of Mr. Vanderbilt's grandson William Amherst Vanderbilt Cecil. As the architectural planning progressed, Biltmore House, conceived as a substantial winter retreat in 1888, evolved into the largest private residence in the United States, and the final major work of both Richard Morris Hunt and Frederick Law Olmsted. Messrs. Hunt and Olmsted had collaborated on various projects throughout their careers, most spectacularly at the World's Columbian Exposition which opened in Chicago in 1893, and with Mr. Vanderbilt on the Vanderbilt Family Mausoleum at New Dorp. Biltmore House and the Estate are the finest surviving examples of their collective genius and arguably the most important, intact work of either man to survive to the present.

In 1888 when George Washington Vanderbilt approached Messrs. Hunt and Olmsted about the design of his planned winter estate, each was the head of a large professional office, in the forefront of their fields, and in the final decade of their respective careers. Richard Morris Hunt (1827-1895), the first American to attend the École des Beaux Arts, was a seminal figure in the establishment of architecture as a profession in the United States, a founder and third president (1888-1891) of the American Institute of Architects, and the architect of choice to the barons of the Gilded Age. During the 1890s, as the Hunt office was producing hundreds of drawings for Biltmore, Mr. Hunt and his staff were designing mansions for William V. Lawrence, Elbridge Gerry, and Mrs. William B. Astor, all on New York's Fifth Avenue. The office also had in hand commissions to design summer cottages at Newport for Ogden Goelet (Ochre Court), and two of Mr. Vanderbilt's brothers, William Kissam (Marble House) and Cornelius Vanderbilt (The Breakers). The Marble House was Hunt's third residence for William K. Vanderbilt. In 1876 Mr. Hunt took his first step in a progress by which he became "the Vanderbilt architect." That year he began the design of Idlehour, William K. Vanderbilt's country home at Oakdale, Long Island. In 1879, the year after Idlehour's completion, he designed William K. Vanderbilt's townhouse at 660 Fifth Avenue, which not only introduced the French Renaissance Chateau style to America, but also became the influential model for a long generation of great houses in New York City. Biltmore House, however, was the crowning expression of the style in America, and it was here on the front terrace of the house that Hunt's portrait was painted by John Singer Sargent in the spring of 1895, a few months before the architect's death in Newport on 31 July.

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Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), acknowledged as the founder of the landscape architecture profession in the United States, was the foremost practitioner of the craft in nineteenth-century America. He came to landscape architecture after a career as a journalist, social philosopher, and farmer on Staten Island where he was a near neighbor to the Vanderbilt's farm at New Dorp. In retrospect, his career as a landscape architect was the logical culmination of a life of travel and close observation of nature and work with the federal government. His first important foray into the field came in 1858 when he joined forces with Calvert Vaux and submitted the winning proposal for the design of New York's Central Park. Olmsted and Vaux's design for the park launched Olmsted on a career which spanned nearly four decades (until he was incapacitated and hospitalized in 1895). During this period he became the foremost park designer in the country with Prospect Park, Brooklyn, Boston's "Emerald Necklace" of parks, and others including the grounds of the United States Capitol and the World's Columbian Exposition. At the same time he designed estates, residential suburbs, college campuses, the grounds of governmental buildings and installations, and other public institutions.

Like Mr. Hunt, Olmsted was engaged on some dozen or more projects while working on Biltmore; however, Olmsted was devoted to the Biltmore work for reasons that transcended his other projects. It was at Biltmore that Olmsted proposed the creation of a great arboretum, the last dream of an aging man. Although portions of the road destined as the artery of the park were built, the project failed as Mr. Vanderbilt's financial support was withdrawn over a period that paralleled Olmsted's own unstoppable descent from family and professional life into mental illness. However, Mr. Olmsted's other ambitions for Biltmore were realized, successfully on nearly every front. Critical among these was his plan that his son Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., should educate himself in the practical work of a landscape architect while on site at Biltmore, studying under Chauncey Beadle who had come to the estate as the representative of the Olmsted office in 1890. The letters exchanged between father and son during this period are knowing, poignant expressions of ambition for his only son, and the necessity to help him secure his own professional future before illness forever closed a father's usefulness to his namesake.

Frederick Law Olmsted, like Mr. Hunt, was ill in the spring of 1895 when John Singer Sargent came to Biltmore to paint his portrait. Hunt would die within a few months, but Olmsted lived another eight years, mostly in a sanatorium. For the portrait, Olmsted posed among the kalmias and rhododendrons with which he blanketed the hillsides of the estate. As the portrait neared completion, Olmsted's health failed, and young Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., donned his father's clothing and continued posing for Sargent. Both portraits commissioned by Mr. Vanderbilt continue to hang in Biltmore House.

The credit for the creation of Biltmore House and its estate are forever associated with Richard Morris Hunt, Frederick Law Olmsted, and their patron George Washington Vanderbilt. However, a very real factor in the implementation of their collective vision was the group of supporting figures who directly oversaw the building and expansion of the estate from 1890 until after the turn of the century. These men are pivotal in the history of Biltmore Estate: Charles McNamee; Richard Sharp Smith; W.A. Thompson and James G. Gall, Jr.; Gifford Pinchot and Carl Alwin Schenck; and Chauncey Delos Beadle.

Charles McNamee (1856-1923), trained as an attorney, came to Asheville with Mr. Vanderbilt in 1888, and purchased some 143 parcels of land in 1888-1889 which formed the core acreage and the site on which construction began in the summer of 1890. Mr. McNamee, whose brother James was married to a cousin of Mr. Vanderbilt, oversaw the construction of Biltmore House and the development of the estate. He approved the purchase of supplies, supervised the work force, and, in short, provided the day-to-day leadership of the enterprise. Mr. McNamee oversaw the estate until 1904 when he departed Asheville to salvage Mr. Vanderbilt's investments in Washington state.

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Richard Sharp Smith (1852-1924) was an Englishman who trained as an architect before his emigration to the United States in 1882. He joined the office of Richard Morris Hunt in 1886, and was sent by Mr. Hunt to Asheville in the summer of 1890 to supervise the construction of the "chateau." Research for this report indicates that Smith's role was larger than that of a "supervising architect" and that in fact, he designed a number of buildings and structures while on site. These, of course, were sent to Mr. Hunt for approval and were labeled and stamped by the firm, just as were the many detailed drawings prepared for the house by Warrington Gillette Lawrence (1861-1938) in Hunt's New York office. Mr. Smith remained on site, supervising construction into the summer and fall of 1896 when he established his own office in Asheville and continued to design buildings for Mr. Vanderbilt and the estate into the early 1900s.

Answering directly to Frederick Law Olmsted, W.A. Thompson and James G. Gall Jr. were hired in 1889 as heads of the engineering and landscape departments, respectively. They were involved in preparing the initial plats and subsequent maps of the estate, laying out roads, siting buildings, and planting the gardens and grounds designed by Olmsted and the Brookline office. Mr. Gall had worked with Olmsted at Central Park, and because of that successful collaboration much trust was placed in him here.

Another pair of figures in this second tier of estate makers was Gifford Pinchot, a forester who came to the estate in February 1892. He initiated the forest management practices that made Biltmore Estate "the cradle of forestry," and where his successor in 1895, Carl Alwin Schenck, established a program of instruction that is recognized as the first school of forestry in the United States.

In 1890, Olmsted sent Chauncey Delos Beadle (1866-1950) to Biltmore to head the nursery department. He had charge of the fields and greenhouses where trees, shrubs, and plants were raised for eventual planting on the estate. Of all these men, George Washington Vanderbilt included, it was Chauncey Beadle's fate and good fortune, to be associated with Biltmore Estate for a longer period than any other individual in its history (save William Amherst Vanderbilt Cecil, the current owner who was born here in 1928). Rising to become superintendent of the estate and holding this position until retirement in 1945, Mr. Beadle occupied Eastcote (#7) until his death in 1950, the closing year of Biltmore's period of significance.

For the last fifteen or so years of his superintendence, Mr. Beadle worked in union with Junius Greene Adams, an attorney for the family who moved onto the estate and into Woodcote (#89) in 1936 and served as president of The Biltmore Company until shortly before his death in 1962. Mr. Adams became an attorney for the estate in the 1910s, in the period following Mr. Vanderbilt's death. He was instrumental in the incorporation of the estate and the management of its assets through the critical years of the 1920s and early 1930s when the fortunes of the estate underwent great change with Cornelia Vanderbilt's marriage, divorce, and departure, and oversaw the opening of the estate to paying visitors in 1930. Mr. Adams put the operation of the estate's dairy farm, whose origins can be traced to the Vanderbilt farm at New Dorp, on a sound footing and oversaw the expansion of its operations and the construction of numerous barns and related agricultural buildings in the 1930s, through the 1940s, and again in the 1950s when changes in milk processing and marketing forced further changes in the operation of the Biltmore Dairy.

The death of Chauncey Beadle in 1950, the end of the period of significance, was the first in a series within the space of a dozen years that precipitated events leading to the division of the estate in 1979. On 22 October 1954, John Francis Amherst Cecil, who had come to the estate as the husband of the heiress Cornelia Vanderbilt in 1924, and who had remained resident here after their divorce in 1934, died and was buried at Calvary Church, Fletcher. Four years later, on 21 December 1958, Mr. Vanderbilt's widow, Edith Stuyvesant Dresser (Vanderbilt) Gerry, died in Providence, Rhode Island; she had spent increasingly less time in Asheville since her marriage in 1925 to Senator Peter Goelet Gerry (1879-1957), and last visited the estate in 1955 when she



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attended the wedding of her eldest grandson George H.V. Cecil. Mr. Cecil and Mrs. Gerry were directors of The Biltmore Company. Junius Greene Adams, the president of The Biltmore Company and a figure associated with the management of the estate and its assets for some four decades, died on 4 January 1962.

Mr. Adams' death symbolized the penultimate changing of the guard in the management of Biltmore Estate. George H.V. Cecil had become an officer of The Biltmore Company in the early 1950s. On Mr. Adams' death he succeeded him as president of the Biltmore Dairy Farms. In 1959 William A.V. Cecil resigned his position at the Chase Bank in New York and came back to Asheville and the Biltmore Estate. From 1962 onward the two brothers shared the management of the estate. Although Cornelia Vanderbilt Goodsir had virtually no connection with Biltmore Estate after 1950, when the final payment was made to her for her interest in the property, her death in 1976 severed another link with the past. In 1979, the property and assets of The Biltmore Company, which included Biltmore House, its estate of some 12,000 acres, and the Biltmore Dairy Farms, were divided between George H.V. Cecil and William A.V. Cecil. The mansion, its grounds and gardens, together with 6,825 surrounding acres became the property of William A.V. Cecil. Biltmore Dairy Farms and the remaining 5,000 acres became the property of George H.V. Cecil.

### I. George Washington Vanderbilt, the Formative Years: 1862-1888

When George Washington Vanderbilt was born on 14 November 1862, he entered the life of a family whose business interests, financial affairs, and social ambitions were well on the way to becoming the stuff of legend. From the family's arrival in what is now the state of New York, as emigrants from Holland in the mid-seventeenth century, until their removal to Staten Island ca. 1700, relatively little is known. The progenitor of the family was one Jan Aersten van der Bilt who settled at Flatbush, Long Island. His son, Aris James van der Bilt acquired property on Staten Island, near New Dorp, and in 1715 deeded his son Jacob van der Bilt a tract of 100 acres. The family included prosperous farmers and like many of their neighbors, they were members of the Moravian Congregation which survives at New Dorp. Jacob van der Bilt (II) and his wife Mary Sprague were the parents of seven known children including a son Cornelius who married Phebe Hand in 1787, Cornelius and Phebe van der Bilt became the parents of nine children; the fourth-born was Cornelius Vanderbilt, born on 27 May 1794 at Port Richmond, Staten Island. Through a remarkable financial genius, bold actions, and some admittedly questionable means, he came to be the richest man in America at his death in 1877.

The family's fortune, based on their control and ownership of railroads, was inaugurated with a simple investment and one boat which grew to a steamship line plying the waters between Staten Island and New York. By 1835, Cornelius Vanderbilt began to be referred to as "the Commodore"; he was worth an estimated \$500,000. Having grown up in a substantial one-and-a-half story frame house that remained his mother's residence until her death in 1854, he built a grand Classical Revival mansion on the farm at New Dorp in the 1830s. In 1846 he moved his family to 10 Washington Place in Manhattan, a three-story-on-basement brownstone row house standing east of Washington Square, which he occupied until his death. His profits from the sea were soon parlayed into the stock of steam-driven railroads serving the metropolitan New York area. By 1867, Cornelius Vanderbilt owned 18,000,000 of 28,500,000 shares of the New York and Hudson Railroad; he was president of the company and by the end of the 1860s he had gained control of the New York Central Railroad which he, in turn, merged with the New York and Hudson Railroad.

"Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt married Sophia Johnston (1795-1868), a cousin, in 1813 and fathered a family of thirteen, including nine daughters. William Henry Vanderbilt (1821-1885), born in 1821, was the fourth child and first son. Four more daughters were born between 1823 and 1828 before a second son, Cornelius Jeremiah (1830-1882), entered the family. A third son George Vanderbilt (1832-1836) was born next, followed by two daughters, and then in 1839 a fourth son was born and named George Washington Vanderbilt

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(1839-1863), in honor of the nation's first president. William Henry Vanderbilt, named for President William Henry Harrison, apparently showed little initial interest in business, but as the second son and his father's namesake took up a dissolute life, Mr. Vanderbilt placed great hopes for the future of the family in the youngest son. Graduated from West Point in 1860, young George W. Vanderbilt enlisted in the Union Army, contracted malaria, and died in 1863 in Paris where he was to have been recuperating in the company of his eldest brother. The fortunes of the family, literally and figuratively, now rested on the shoulders of William Henry Vanderbilt.

William Henry Vanderbilt was born on 8 May 1821 in New Brunswick, New Jersey, where his father had a terminal of his steamship line; he was educated at Columbia College. In 1841 he married Maria Louisa Kissam (1821-1896), the daughter of the Reverend Samuel Kissam (1796-1868) and Margaret Hamilton Adams (1796-1872). William Henry Vanderbilt's first position was that of a banking clerk. Sometime after the marriage his health broke, and the family doctor is said to have recommended fresh air and a new occupation. With the help of his father, he took up farming at New Dorp, an enterprise that proved profitable with the markets in New York. Next his father made him receiver for the small Staten Island Railroad which he eventually turned around. In 1864, following the death of his youngest son, "Commodore" Vanderbilt named William Henry Vanderbilt vice-president of the New York and Harlem Railroad and to a like post in other family-controlled businesses. On his father's death in 1877, William Henry Vanderbilt became head of the family's railroad empire and enlarged its fortune in the years until his own death in 1885 when he was probably the wealthiest man in America.

Coincident with his appointment as heir-apparent of the Vanderbilt fortune in 1864 William Henry Vanderbilt laid plans to move from the house at New Dorp he had occupied for some two decades. He moved the family to Manhattan where in 1866 he purchased a lot in the southeast corner of Fifth Avenue and 40th Street and there built a substantial house that he occupied until 1881. Between 1843 and 1862 nine children were born to William Henry and Maria Louisa (Kissam) Vanderbilt. Although the second son, Allen (1846-1858), died as a boy of twelve, the remaining four sons and four daughters were part of family life in the Fifth Avenue mansion. George Washington Vanderbilt, the youngest of the eight, had been born on Staten Island; his childhood was spent at the family's first Fifth Avenue house. His siblings comprised a group of men and women who would come to enjoy a remarkable, and unprecedented role in American society. A family portrait, commissioned by Mr. Vanderbilt from Seymour Guy and exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1874, shows the family gathered in a sitting room in 459 Fifth Avenue. It now hangs in the second floor living hall at Biltmore House.

George Washington Vanderbilt and his siblings would also prove to be a group of remarkable builders, erecting houses that symbolized the American Gilded Age in a fashion unequalled by any other family. Cornelius Vanderbilt (1843-1899), the eldest son and namesake of his grandfather, married Alice Claypoole Gwynne (1845-1934) in 1867 and erected a mansion designed by George Browne Post on Fifth Avenue at 57th Street (now the site of Bergdorf Goodman) which he doubled in size while also building The Breakers at Newport. Margaret Louisa Vanderbilt (1845-1924), the eldest daughter, was married in 1874 to Elliott Fitch Shepherd (1833-1893); the Shepherds occupied a mansion at 2 West 52nd Street, a part of the famed Vanderbilt double-house on Fifth Avenue between 51st and 52nd Streets. They also erected Woodlea, a grand country house designed by McKim, Mead & White, in Scarborough, Westchester County, New York. William Kissam Vanderbilt (1849-1920) was married in 1874 to Alva Erskine Smith (1853-1933), one of the most socially ambitious women in American history, and with her he built Idlehour at Oakdale, Long Island, the French Renaissance Revival-style mansion at 660 Fifth Avenue, and The Marble House at Newport. Emily Thorn Vanderbilt (1852-1946), the second daughter in the family, was married in 1872 to William Douglas Sloan (1844-1915); the Sloans resided at 642 Fifth Avenue, in a block of the double-house erected by her father, and at their country house, Elm Court in Lenox, designed by Peabody & Stearns. Florence Adele Vanderbilt (1854-1952), the third daughter was married in 1877 to Hamilton McKnown Twombly (1849-1910), a railroad

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magnate in his own right; the Twombleys built 684 Fifth Avenue and a vast house, Florham, in New Jersey to the design by McKim, Mead & White. Frederick William Vanderbilt (1856-1938) married in 1878 Louise Holmes (Anthony) Torrance (1844-1926); he would build a Classical Revival house designed by McKim, Mead & White at Hyde Park, as well as Rough Point in Newport, a house designed by Peabody & Stearns that was later a residence of James Buchanan Duke (1856-1925) and, last, his daughter Duke (1912-1993). Eliza Osgood "Lila" Vanderbilt (1860-1936) married William Seward Webb (1851-1926) in 1881; the Webbs occupied the house at 680 Fifth Avenue and built a large, handsome agricultural estate, Shelburne Farms in Vermont, designed by Robert Henderson Robertson.

At his death on 4 January 1877, Cornelius Vanderbilt left an estate in excess of \$100 million; William Henry Vanderbilt, his principal heir, received over \$90 million while his eight sisters were humiliated by bequests which ranged from \$250,000 to \$500,000 each for a total of \$2,450,000. His second son, Cornelius Jeremiah (1830-1882), a gambler and wastrel, was bequeathed the income from a \$200,000 trust administered by William Henry Vanderbilt. Five years after his father's death he committed suicide. Commodore Vanderbilt's death and the son's inheritance unleashed a spending and building spree that had no equal in American social history and would, in turn, be further aggrandized by William Henry Vanderbilt's death eight years later in 1885.

In his mid-teens, young George Washington Vanderbilt, having been educated at home by tutors, saw these building projects at first hand and the experience cannot but have influenced his eventual construction of Biltmore House. In 1879 when George Vanderbilt was a lad of sixteen, his father bought the entire west side of Fifth Avenue between 51st and 52nd Streets, and commissioned John Butler Snook to design a grand two-part mansion which comprised an imposing residence (640 Fifth Avenue) for himself, Mrs. Vanderbilt, young Lila, and George, and a like block containing houses for his daughter Emily and Mr. Sloan at 642 Fifth Avenue and his eldest daughter Margaret and her husband Mr. Shepherd at 2 West 52nd Street. Mr. Snook was then one of the city's most prominent architects and had earlier designed Grand Central Station for Mr. Vanderbilt and the A.T. Stewart dry goods store. William Henry Vanderbilt's house was diagonally across Fifth Avenue from St. Patrick's Cathedral which occupies the east side of the avenue between 50th and 51st streets. It was completed and occupied in 1881. Simultaneously, his eldest sons--George's brothers--were erecting mansions. In the block immediately north of the double house, William K. Vanderbilt erected a French Renaissance style limestone house to designs prepared by Richard Morris Hunt. After Idlehour, Hunt's first commission from William K. Vanderbilt, this was the most significant Vanderbilt-family commission for Hunt and it secured for him their patronage for the rest of his life. Five blocks to the north Cornelius Vanderbilt (II) built a vast ahistorical pile in the southwest corner of Fifth Avenue and 57th Street with its entrance at 1 West 57th Street; George B. Post was the architect for that house and for the expansion in 1892 which doubled the house in size and made it the largest townhouse ever built in the United States.

In the period from 1879 to 1881, when 640 Fifth Avenue was erected and occupied, young George Vanderbilt saw the house through construction; it was only a ten-block walk up Fifth Avenue from home. He also accompanied his parents on five trips abroad during the period from 1880 to 1885, when paintings and decorative arts were commissioned from artists and the leading decorative arts and furnishing houses in Paris. In New York, the Herter Brothers firm had charge of the interior decoration of the mansion, which appears to have been mainly the work of Charles B. Atwood, an architect in its employ. The lavish, eclectic interiors were then recorded for all time in a privately printed four-volume monograph, *Mr. Vanderbilt's House and Collection*, which was published in 1883-1884 and remains the most important record of a Gilded Age mansion in America.

In the event William Henry Vanderbilt enjoyed his splendid new mansion for a short time. Whether he had intimations of his coming death is uncertain; however, in 1884 he commissioned Richard Morris Hunt to design

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a family mausoleum for the private family burying grounds adjoining the Moravian Cemetery at New Dorp. The Romanesque Revival-style mausoleum, based on the Church of St. Gilles at Arles, was approved that year and construction began. On December 8, 1885, Mr. Vanderbilt had lunch with his wife, daughter Florence Twombly, and son George. After lunch he received Robert Garrett, president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, in his study; in the midst of their discussion concerning a new railroad line into New York City, Mr. Vanderbilt suffered a heart attack/stroke and died. After services at St. Bartholomew's Church, Mr. Vanderbilt's body was taken to New Dorp and placed in the cemetery's receiving vault, where it remained under Pinkerton guard until 3 December 1886 when it was placed in the completed mausoleum (*The New York Times*, 4, 5 Dec. 1886).

In the years between his father's death in 1877 and his own in 1885, William Henry Vanderbilt had essentially doubled his fortune and left an estate of approximately \$200 million, with bequests to his wife and eight children that reflected a strong sense of patriarchy. Cognizant of the destruction of sibling affection that followed on his father's will, he was much more generous to his daughters in his will dated 25 September 1884. However, his wealth was nowhere near equally divided. The mansion at 640 Fifth Avenue, the stables on Madison Avenue at 52nd Street, the furnishings, his art collection, and personal property were devised to his widow for her natural life. She was also given a \$200,000 annual annuity and the right to distribute \$500,000 of the principal providing same at her death. Margaret Louisa Shepherd and Emily Thorn Sloan each received title to their adjoining houses. Florence Twombly and Eliza "Lila" Webb received adjoining lots in the southwest corner of Fifth Avenue and 54th Street where he was then building houses for them, and instructed his executors to complete them at his estate's expense if they were not finished at his death. Trusts in the amount of \$5 million each were established from a collection of bonds valued at \$40 million for each of the eight children. A second \$40 million in bonds and stock shares was set apart for equal division among his eight children. Cornelius, the eldest son, was given an additional \$2 million. In the fourteenth clause of his will, Mr. Vanderbilt devised 640 Fifth Avenue, its furnishings, his art collection and the assets devised to his wife to George Washington Vanderbilt for his natural life. If he produced a male heir (grandson) those properties were to pass to him; if he did not, that inheritance was to next pass to his first-born grandson William Henry Vanderbilt II (1870-1892) under the same conditions and then to his second eldest grandson Cornelius Vanderbilt III (1873-1942). His object, declared in his will, "being that my present residence and my collection of works of art be retained and maintained by a male descendant bearing the name of Vanderbilt." Mr. Vanderbilt made other bequests to members of his family including his uncle Jacob Vanderbilt, cousins, his nephew William Vanderbilt Kissam, and others. He devised \$200,000 to Vanderbilt University and charitable bequests of either \$50,000 or \$100,000 to twelve institutions including the Metropolitan Museum, the Moravian Church at New Dorp, and Episcopal Church bodies. Finally, in the twenty-second clause of the will he bequeathed "All the rest, residue, and remainder" of his estate in equal shares to his two eldest sons; thereby Cornelius and William K. Vanderbilt each received additional inheritances of about \$50 million each.

George Washington Vanderbilt had inherited about \$1 million from his grandfather in 1877 when he was fourteen years old. Now, at the age of twenty-three, he inherited a further \$10 million. At this distance (and within the bounds of this project) it is difficult to ascertain his actual wealth. William Henry Vanderbilt had already conveyed the Vanderbilt farm on Staten Island to his youngest son who was then operating a dairy on the property, or would soon. There is also every likelihood that gifts had been made to George Vanderbilt who had remained at home and the companion to his parents for the four years they occupied 640 Fifth Avenue together. Whatever the case, he possessed at least \$11 million, but likely more. Much of his wealth, except for the \$5 million held in trust, would be expended in the creation of Biltmore Estate.

Before a winter residence in western North Carolina was even contemplated, George Washington Vanderbilt was engaged on four building and landscape projects which effectively prepared him for the great role he would

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assume as the builder of Biltmore. In each case he had hired either Frederick Law Olmsted or Richard Morris Hunt as his designer and in at least two of the four projects the three had worked together.

The Vanderbilt Mausoleum at New Dorp was probably the first of these collaborations. Richard Morris Hunt's general design for the family vault was approved late in 1884, and construction probably begun in 1885. It was planned to receive the bodies of generations of the Vanderbilt family, including those of Cornelius Vanderbilt and his wife, who had earlier been interred in a small but architecturally sophisticated mausoleum that still stands, empty, in the Moravian Cemetery at New Dorp. The new mausoleum stood incomplete in December 1885 at William Henry Vanderbilt's death. George Vanderbilt oversaw its completion, the entombment of his father, together with the bodies of Commodore Vanderbilt and his two wives, in early December 1886. Mr. Vanderbilt also supervised the landscape design of its fourteen-acre private grounds in the northwest corner of the Moravian Cemetery by Frederick Law Olmsted.

Simultaneously, Mr. Vanderbilt was the patron for agricultural improvements to the "Homestead" on Staten Island for which Mr. Hunt designed a series of buildings including a new barn and a dairy for the farm where Mr. Vanderbilt had the herd of Jersey cattle that would eventually be brought south to Biltmore (RMH to GWV, 6 IV 89). It was probably on the farm that plants were being raised in 1889 under the supervision of Mr. Bottomley for the grounds of the Mausoleum (FLO to GWV, 2 III 89). While both of these projects were advancing, George Vanderbilt undertook one of the first of his philanthropic projects. In 1886 the young heir, with a considerable income at his disposal, commissioned Mr. Hunt to design a branch of the New York Free Circulating Library (the precursor of the New York Public Library) for Jackson Square (251 W. 13th Street). The building was completed, furnished, and given to the city in summer 1888.

While the architectural and landscape plans for Biltmore were progressing on the desks of both Messrs. Hunt and Olmsted, George Vanderbilt purchased a summer estate, Pointe d'Acadie, in Bar Harbor, Maine. A substantial two-story Shingle Style house already stood on the property, designed by Charles Coolidge Haight (1841-1917) for Gouverneur Morris Ogden. It was apparently occupied with only the usual improvements to interior decoration; however, the extensive landscape improvements, mostly during 1890 and 1891, were significant and expensive.

After Eliza Vanderbilt was married to William Seward Webb in December 1881, George Vanderbilt remained at home and a companion to his parents during the four years up to his father's death in December 1885. During the decade that followed the bonds between him and his mother would draw even closer; Maria Louisa Kissam Vanderbilt was sixty-four years of age when her husband died, and she would survive him for nearly eleven years, dying in 1896. During this period Mrs. Vanderbilt and her youngest son continued the patterns of entertaining that she and her husband had established, mostly gatherings of family and a small circle of friends, and the seasonal visits and travels in the United States and abroad that had become routine. Young George Vanderbilt continued to buy books, expanding his library at 640 Fifth Avenue, and making some other improvements there, including a conservatory. After a time, mother and son sought escape from the hard cold winters experienced in New York City.

Affluent members of society had long since traveled to cooler climes to escape summer heat, whether to the coast to Newport, Long Island, and summer colonies in Maine and Massachusetts, or to the mountains to Lenox, Stockbridge, into Vermont, or to springs and hotels throughout the Eastern Seaboard. Escape from the rigors of winter was a relatively new prospect, and it coincided, in large part, with the development of new railroad lines. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century (and into the early twentieth century), winter colonies developed or expanded at Camden and Aiken, South Carolina, coastal Georgia, and points throughout Florida. Ever-expanding railroad lines linked New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and other urban centers with

these southern resorts. In 1880 the Western North Carolina Railroad, which had started its path westward from Raleigh in the antebellum period, reached Asheville and precipitated its development as a health and seasonal resort that continued unabated for nearly a half-century. From this distance, it is unclear just how George Vanderbilt heard of Asheville and its attractions, whether from advertisements for its "ozoniferous atmosphere," temperate climate, and splendid scenery, or through a personal reference by friends or associates. As early as 1870 promotional guides such as *Western North Carolina: Its Resources, Climate, Scenery, and Salubrity* promoted the potential of the region. However, with the arrival of the railroad these became more numerous and appealing in their representation. Real estate developers, innkeepers, doctors, and other professional men and women relocated to Asheville and thrived in the burgeoning city. Among these was Dr. Samuel Westray Battle (1854-1937), who championed the region's many curative powers. The early boarding houses and small hotels were soon put in the shadow by the Battery Park Hotel, a shingle-clad Queen Anne-style frame hotel designed by Edward Hazelhurst of Philadelphia and offering first-class accommodations. The Battery Park Hotel opened for guests in 1886. In the winter of 1887-1888, George W. Vanderbilt and his mother came to Asheville and stayed at the Battery Park Hotel. While Mrs. Vanderbilt sought the medical advice and treatments recommended by Dr. Battle, her son explored the countryside on foot and on horseback.

## II. A Collaboration of Genius--Creating Biltmore Estate, 1888-1896

The ambiguity and uncertainty surrounding the visit of George Washington Vanderbilt and his mother to Asheville that winter, probably early in 1888, appears surprising now given the fact that his initial appreciation for the climate and scenery evolved into the construction of the largest private house in the United States. The decision made early in 1888 was simply to build a winter residence, one that was substantial, comfortable for mother and son, in a relatively temperate setting that was conducive to good health and offered handsome scenery and a degree of privacy. Within the space of a few months the project took on a life of its own, swelling to fill the opportunity and engaging the talents of both the foremost architect and landscape architect practicing in America.

Chronologically, the first known account of the origins of the estate appears (second-hand) in a letter of 20 January 1891 that Frederick Law Olmsted wrote to his long-time friend, Frederick John Kingsbury of Waterbury, Connecticut. He recounted a visit to the proposed house site with Mr. Vanderbilt, which probably occurred in the summer of 1888, and quoted Mr. Vanderbilt's later recollection of events:

I came to Asheville with my mother. We found the air mild and invigorating and I thought well of the climate. I enjoyed the distant scenery. I took long rambles and found pleasure in doing so. In one of them I came to this spot under favorable circumstances and thought the prospect finer than any other I had seen. It occurred to me that I would like to have a house here. The land was beyond the field of speculation and I bought a piece of it at a low rate. Then when I began to consider the matter more seriously I saw that if I built upon it I should not have pleasant neighbors, so I sent Mr. McNamee down here to buy some of them out, and step by step, without any very definite end in view, I have acquired about 2000 acres. Now I have brought you here to examine it and tell me if I have been doing anything very foolish.

Thirteen years later, on 5 March 1904, another account of those first steps appeared in an unsigned article in the *Asheville Citizen* which announced Charles McNamee's departure from Biltmore Estate.

It was on May 1, 1888, that Mr. McNamee first came to Asheville. He was a lawyer in active practice in New York City, and was counsel for his relative, Mr. George W. Vanderbilt. Mr. Vanderbilt had come to Asheville in the early part of 1888, the year of the great blizzard and the contrast between the weather in New York and Asheville delighted Mr. Vanderbilt with Asheville. He asked Mr. McNamee to spend a

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week here and the latter came without the slightest idea that the trip had any other purpose than ... On the next day Mr. Vanderbilt and Mr. McNamee took a horseback ride and the former drew rein where the esplanade of Biltmore House now stands.

From this grand view point Mr. McNamee looked on a vast sea of great, green mountains--while a traveled man he had seen nothing more superb in nature. To the north was Asheville and the high bluffs of the French Broad, to the east was Craggy and cloud-capped Mount Mitchell, to the south the long main range of the Blue Ridge stretching from Virginia to Georgia. To the west was Pisgah, predestined to be part of the estate though at this time no flitting thought of this crossed Mr. Vanderbilt's mind.

Close at hand were farms and humble houses. Farms were here and there and the colored village of Shiloh extended its log cabins close to the spot where the horsemen were and near at hand was Shiloh church and graveyard. Mr. Vanderbilt, without premise, said he wished Mr. McNamee to buy this land and all around it. Mr. McNamee understood this direction and proceeded forthwith. The two men rode to the farm house of Geo. W. Britt whose farm of ten acres occupied the site of Biltmore House and proposed to buy from him.

Except for the fact that it was Mr. McNamee's brother who was married to Mr. Vanderbilt's cousin and the implication that Mr. McNamee did not know the purpose of the May 1888 trip, this account is largely factual. The deed for the George W. Britt land, a conveyance of sixty acres for \$2,400, was dated 3 May 1888 and recorded on 12 May by which time Mr. McNamee had purchased six additional tracts here (Buncombe County Deeds: 62/310-12, Grantee Index). By the end of June, when Mr. McNamee apparently returned to New York, he had made a total of forty-two purchases for tracts contiguous with or near the original Britt purchase. A further twenty-five purchases were made in the second half of 1888. Some eighty-three transactions occurred in 1889, and in 1890 Charles McNamee made a further fifty-one acquisitions on George Vanderbilt's behalf. However, by fall 1889 the purpose of his purchases had become common knowledge in Asheville. In early November 1888, the *Asheville Citizen* had published an article on Mr. Vanderbilt's purchases, and speculation then focused on a possible industrial and mechanical school for the youth of western North Carolina (*The New York Times*, 2, 11 Nov. 1888). Mr. McNamee made some occasional purchases in the 1890s for Mr. Vanderbilt but his role as a cover for the purchases was long past. George Vanderbilt began making purchases in his own name in June 1890 and acquired numerous tracts in the 1890s, including the Pisgah Forest lands, and he added to his estate every year up to his death in 1914 (Buncombe County Grantee Index).

The sequence in which George Vanderbilt approached Richard Morris Hunt and Frederick Law Olmsted in mid-1888 for work at his winter estate is now unknown. However, Frederick Law Olmsted was the first of the two to visit the site. Exactly when that visit occurred is as yet unconfirmed, but it was probably in the late summer or early autumn of 1888. While in Asheville, and probably in the company of Mr. Vanderbilt, Olmsted had met a local civil engineer, J.G. Aston. In a letter of 29 October 1888, Olmsted transmitted the agreement between Mr. Vanderbilt and the engineer to produce a preliminary survey of the parcels Mr. McNamee had assembled. This survey was destined to form the basis of Olmsted's critique of the property, and to that end, Olmsted asked Mr. Aston to note local conditions as he proceeded and to make note of "any peat bed, or deposit of black vegetable mould or muck on or near the property." Olmsted was already anticipating the need for creating a large productive nursery on the property and for landscape stone. He instructed Mr. Aston, "If you find ledges likely to supply good stone either for building or for road metal, please indicate locality, conditions for quarrying, etc., and send samples to us by express, C.O.D." The next day, Mr. Olmsted wrote to James Gall, with whom he had earlier worked on Central Park, advising him of the project and the client, but withholding the actual location:

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I have been on the ground and have surveys under way with reference to a preliminary scheme of improvement. There will be occasion probably next summer for operatives of a class in which you have been engaged, draining, road-making, water works, agricultural, etc. on a large and fine scale, upon plans that we are to supply.

Would you like to be our representative on the ground?

In the event Mr. Gall was hired and came to Biltmore a year later.

Meanwhile, Richard Morris Hunt, who apparently did not visit the site until October 1889, probably began his preliminary studies for the house in the summer of 1888, and its design and size evolved over the course of some nine months. In late winter, 1889, Mr. Hunt and his patron had settled on the general concept for the present house. What appear to be the earliest studies have been published (Bryan, 38-41, 52-53). The "first" of these is for a substantial brick Colonial Revival-style country house which shares obvious associations with McKim, Mead, and White's design for Commodore William Edgar's house in Newport. This was a building Mr. Vanderbilt had seen, and plans and elevations for at least two variants of this proposal survive. Mr. Hunt's "second" study is for a more imposing two-story Manorial Revival house, combining the English Tudor and French manorial traditions and detailing. Sheathed in either stucco or stone with brick dressings, this two-and-a-half-story house is enlivened with a picturesque roofline and highly varied fenestration including dormer windows and an oriel window which distinguish the present house.

Given the gulf between these substantial, yet somewhat conventional houses and the French Renaissance chateau eventually erected at Biltmore, Mr. Hunt probably produced further studies that bridge this gap. One important step in the evolution is represented by two previously unpublished, handsome watercolor sketches for a large three-story country house of Italian inspiration (Biltmore Archives, BHA1.00731, .01109). The surviving views of the side and rear elevations of a house, again either of stone or stucco on masonry, show a multi-stage entrance tower crowned by an open, arcaded porch. Extensive use is made of arch-headed windows, in pairs and trios, which relate to first-story loggias and porches on which one could savor both fresh air and the mountain scenery. The transition from this proposal to the house as built is a relatively short distance, particularly in comparison to the earliest design for the free-standing chateau, without a main-level carriage house and service quarters, which Mr. Olmsted saw and commented upon in his now famous letter of 2 March 1889.

Doubtless, the architects and draftsmen in the office of Richard Morris Hunt were very busy in the winter of 1888-1889 producing the preliminary plans and elevations for the house that were seemingly ready for presentation in late February 1889. Olmsted was in New York to see Mr. Vanderbilt, missed him through a change of plans, and afterward wrote saying "I went to Mr. Hunt's office and saw the revised plans which I very much admire" (FLO to GWV, 2 Mar. 1889). That same day Mr. Olmsted wrote Mr. Hunt a three-page letter sharing his critique of the plan. In it Olmsted made two recommendations Hunt came to adopt which became critical features in the design of the house and its relationship to the landscape: the addition of the stable and service blocks off the north end of the house to block the bitter northwest winds and to "set" views of the house; and the addition of a south terrace as a place for promenade whose bulk would also shelter a place for winter walking among evergreen shrubbery that became "The Shrubby (subsequently The Ramble (#25e)." Olmsted also suggested the location of "a good place for glass" which became the site of the Conservatory (#26b).

While the general location for the house had been "fixed" in the area where it now stands, the actual siting of the house came later in 1889. On 31 May 1889 Mr. Olmsted wrote McNamee with a sketch of an observation tower and instruction for its construction. This tower was to be erected on the site of the house and to have



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platforms on levels proposed for the floors and terraces; the views from these platforms would represent the views Mr. Vanderbilt, his mother, and guests would have from the house. A composite horizontal photograph (BHA1-05884) made up of three sequential images showing such a tower survives, as does a like photograph (BHA1-01576) composed of two images which represents the then view west from the house site. These are believed to be the earliest surviving views of the landscape that would become the house grounds of the estate. They were probably made by Asheville photographer T.H. Lindsay. In this same letter Olmsted made another recommendation. "It may be well to consider whether it would not pay to have some one of the houses on the property, and, if practicable, in a direction from the house site opposite that of Asheville, cleaned and fitted enough to serve as a camp or cantonment for a night or two . . . . Before work begins Mr. Hunt and his assistants and contractors and surveying parties will have need for such temporary lodging." The brick house on the Alexander farm was later renovated as just such a temporary lodging and occupied by Mr. Vanderbilt, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Olmsted, and others.

Even as Mr. Olmsted was writing this letter--the views were made later, probably in the summer or early autumn--George Vanderbilt and his architect were engaged in one last endeavor affecting the appearance and character of Biltmore House. On 15 May 1889 Richard Morris Hunt and his wife, Catherine, sailed from New York with Mr. Vanderbilt on a European trip that carried them mainly to England and France and kept them abroad into mid July. Patron and architect, and Mrs. Hunt, visited country houses, galleries, gardens, and shops where furnishings were bought for the new house. Conjecture that this trip occasioned a change of plans from a substantial house to the mansion that was built appears to be misplaced. The concept of a great French Renaissance Revival chateau had surely been accepted; Messrs. Hunt and Vanderbilt trained their eyes on places and their finish that could be applied to the new estate. Individually or together they visited great houses, both old and new. They traveled to Knole, Hatfield, and Haddon Hall, and both were the guests of Ferdinand Rothschild at Waddesdon Manor, the vast, lavish, luxurious French-style country house designed by Gabriel-Hippolyte-Alexandre Destailleux. The original house, built from 1874-1884 and probably already known to both men, was newly expanded in 1888-1889; possibly they saw the project under construction. The two may also have visited Leopold Rothchild's Ascott. The men traveled separately to Paris, where Mr. Hunt conferred with William K. Vanderbilt and his wife on Marble House, and both were the guests of the Duc d'Aumale at Chantilly. In her account of this trip Mrs. Hunt mentions only these few great houses by name; however, Messrs. Vanderbilt and Hunt probably visited many houses, particularly in France, that have gone unmentioned. This anonymous group likely included the chateaux d'Amboise, Blois, Chambord, Fountainbleau, and a number of the important new country houses built by the aristocracy and nouveau riche in late nineteenth century France, among which the chateau of Vouzeron, also designed by Destailleux, was then under construction. Vanderbilt and Hunt both acquired photographs of houses and cathedrals, as souvenirs of visits and for study; Mr. Vanderbilt's collection of photographs, from this trip and others, remains at Biltmore.

In the event, the trip that began for the two men and Catherine Hunt on 15 May 1889 was but the first of two trips made in 1889 that shaped the appearance of Biltmore House. The second trip was one undertaken by Warrington Gillette Lawrence (ca. 1860-1938), an architect in Hunt's New York office. On 15 September 1889, Mr. Lawrence wrote to Mr. Hunt from the Chateau de Blois.

We have been some time getting here--but now we are here, and I have seen the Chateau Blois--and am now ready to die--it is grand. I wish I could tell you all I feel regarding it--I don't wonder any longer that you admire so much the Francis Premier wing. It is undoubtedly a fine piece of design, my preference is still for the Louis XII--I think the brick and stone combination on the Court one of the finest things I have ever seen, and by the way we have seen some nice things since we left home.

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We took a nice little trip through Holland and Belgium--spent two weeks in Paris--and are now on our way down the Loire--We have been to Maintenon (what a beautiful chateau it is), to Chartres, to Orleans--where we saw that beautiful renaissance work in Diana Poitiers, and Agnes Sorrells houses, also Beaugency--where we saw some fine work in the Hotel de Ville, to Vendome, and now at Blois. We have had many a fine time and have seen many beautiful things, made some sketches and taken many notes which I hope will be very useful to us in our work by and by. . . .

I hope you are well--and that work is progressing on Mr. V.'s chateau, I am very anxious to see what changes have been made.

Kind regards to Mr. Fornachon and the office.

While the precise circumstances of this trip have yet to be resolved, as does the question of whether Mr. Hunt or Mr. Vanderbilt supported the study excursion financially, Warrington Lawrence's trip to France, including travels to Versailles and Fontainebleau, was of enormous influence on the detailing of Biltmore House. The principal exterior elevation drawings of Biltmore House were drawn by Warrington Lawrence, as were an apparent majority of the detail drawings. Richard Morris Hunt was the head of the office and surely responsible for the conceptual design of the mansion. He maintained a steady correspondence with Mr. Vanderbilt, and others as it progressed, and oversaw his office's--and Mr. Lawrence's--work on Biltmore. The role of Mr. Lawrence in the house should not be underestimated, however, nor can it be overstated for its contributions to the elegance and grandeur of a house that continues to impress visitors, scholars, and critics with its striking combination of historicism and modernity.

George Vanderbilt returned to the United States in mid-July. Awaiting him in New York was Frederick Law Olmsted's appraisal of the Asheville property, based on his own site visit and the report of Robert J. Douglas (1813-1897), a nurseryman-forester who had spent three days inspecting the acreage at Olmsted's request (FLO to GWV, 12 July 1889). Comprised of nine sections and running to thirty-six pages in the surviving double-spaced Olmsted office copy, this report is in the form of a letter to Mr. Vanderbilt, and it stands as one of the most important documents in the history of Biltmore Estate. Mr. Olmsted outlines specific recommendations for the winter estate, nearly all of which were put into effect, including the placement of the house, its water supply, the approach road, and the use of lands for agriculture, a deer park, an arboretum, and a nursery for growing out plants for the estate. Only the arboretum failed to be realized. The heart of the report, Section III, "The Forest," is sixteen pages long, and contained a detailed accounting of the present conditions of the estate woodlands and how they could be improved for scenery and profit by systematic managed plantings of white pines and native species that would thrive in local conditions. This recommendation became the basis for forest management practices instituted by Mr. Douglas and continued by Gifford Pinchot and Carl Schenck. It would, Olmsted wrote, "not only make the best use of the property for the direct satisfaction of yourself and friends but would be doing the country an inestimable service and thus from the start give the Estate a rank like that which Blair Athol has among the great British estates."

Within a week of receiving this letter, Mr. Vanderbilt came to Asheville staying at the Battery Park Hotel (*Daily Citizen*, 20 July 1889). Three months later, on 16 October 1889, George Vanderbilt, Richard Morris Hunt, and Frederick Law Olmsted gathered on the estate grounds for the first time together to consider the placement of the house and a host of related matters (*The New York Times*, 25 Oct. 1889). Later in the fall, W.A. Thompson, who had succeeded Mr. Aston as surveyor of the estate, was hired to be head of the engineering operations on the estate and James G. Gall Jr. was hired to have direction over the horticultural and gardening operations; both men, the first full-time managers of the estate, were to be paid a salary of \$1,800 per year (FLO to GWV, 6 Nov. 1889). During the months between the October 1889 visit and the summer of 1890, when construction

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began on the chateau, a host of logistical matters were discussed and resolved, and facilities were erected for the transport of materials to the site of the Esplanade, which served as a work yard for the great undertaking. The first steps in the effort to erect "one of the most beautiful homes in the world" were reported in the *The New York Times* on 7 December 1889.

### The Construction of the Chateau and Estate Buildings, 1890-1896

The construction of the mansion, its adjoining gardens, architectural and landscape features, and a series of important estate buildings and facilities required significant managerial and organizational skills on the part of all involved in the effort. Messrs. Vanderbilt, Hunt, and Olmsted stood at the apex of the project and final authority remained with them through these critical years. However, the essential on-site, day-to-day supervision and control of the work was overseen by their lieutenants and yet another extended tier of men under them, together with D. C. Weeks & Company, the principal masonry contractor. The key to the success of the collaboration lay in the experience with similar or related projects which each individual brought to his work at Biltmore, and their cooperation on earlier projects for Mr. Vanderbilt and members of his family. Equally important was the high degree of mutual respect, held by each for the others and a clearly perceived and practiced division of responsibility and labor. While some frictions developed over the course of construction, they were of little importance and never seriously threatened the essential harmony. Another factor contributing to the success of the work was the constant communication, in the form of letters and telegrams among the principals, and the weekly and monthly reports produced in respective offices on the estate and forwarded to Mr. Vanderbilt, Mr. Hunt, and Mr. Olmsted. These kept everyone informed and on an equal footing. Equally critical was the series of photographs, made regularly through the course of construction by T.H. Lindsay, which were distributed to Messrs. Vanderbilt, Hunt, and Olmsted from Asheville.

After George Vanderbilt, the next person with the longest association with Biltmore Estate was Charles McNamee, who served as Mr. Vanderbilt's agent in Asheville and as his chief financial officer there, and who remained as manager of the estate until 1904. McNamee saw to the building of the private railroad line linking the Biltmore station with the Esplanade construction site; the creation and opening of the brick works managed by O.B. Wheeler, which produced all manner of brick and tile products for the estate; and the operations of the Asheville Woodworking Company, which processed lumber and produced millwork for the mansion and other estate buildings. His office handled the payroll for the project, ordered goods, and negotiated for services throughout the period. Charles McNamee occupied a house, Old Ford, at the north edge of the estate and an office on the estate which came to be housed in the mid-1890s in the Estate Office (#2) designed by Hunt.

Richard Sharp Smith, employed in Hunt's office since 1886, arrived at Biltmore as supervising architect for the estate in the summer of 1890, and he remained there until the summer of 1896, when the essential fabric of the mansion and most of the principal buildings had been completed. Nearly half of that tenure is documented in a surviving letter book, covering the period from 16 September 1890 to 17 June 1893. It records his activities on a weekly, if not daily basis, as he watched excavation, construction, and finish work proceed at the chateau, concerned himself with the qualities of cements, stone, brick, and lumber, drew plans, subsequently submitted to Hunt for approval, for the stone and brick bridges (#6c-d), the garden walls, gates, gardeners cottage and stable (#26). He undertook alterations to an existing house (possibly Woodcote, #89) for Baron d'Alinge, the first resident farm manager, and produced the drawings in April-May 1892 for the renovation of the Benjamin Julius Alexander brick farm house (see #151) which served as Mr. Vanderbilt's temporary residence and guest house. In addition to the mansion and the buildings in its vicinity, he also supervised the construction of River Cliff Cottage (#42), the now lost guest house often used by Mr. Olmsted, and the shepherd's cottage (#98), which survives as one of the two oldest Vanderbilt-era residences at Biltmore Estate.

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James G. Gall Jr. and W.A. Thompson, as heads, respectively, of the landscape and engineering departments on the estate since November 1889, worked under the supervision of both Mr. McNamee and Mr. Olmsted. As the development of the estate gained momentum in 1889 to 1892, three additional men--Edward H. Burnett, Eugene d'Aligne, and Chauncey Delos Beadle--came to Biltmore and managed components of the horticultural and agricultural operations.

As early as 1886 Edward H. Burnett (1849-1925) had served as an agricultural consultant to Mr. Vanderbilt for improvements at The Homestead on Staten Island and as a purchasing agent. He continued in those roles at Biltmore until 1892-1893, providing plans for farm buildings, including the sheep barn (#97) and shepherd's cottage (#98), and purchasing machinery and equipment for both the farm and quarrying operations. In 1889 he recommended Eugene d'Alinge (18??-1895) to Mr. Vanderbilt to take charge of the initial farm operations. He had responsibility for the field crops, the newly-established sheep farm and dairy herd, and smaller poultry and swine operations. In 1894, he succeeded his father as Baron d'Allinges de Condre et de Laringe and became the first president of the North Carolina State Dairymen's Association. Illness forced his departure from the estate in spring 1895; he died in July and was succeeded as farm supervisor by George F. Weston, who had come as his assistant in 1891.

In spring 1890 Olmsted sent Chauncey Delos Beadle to the estate to manage the nursery operations at which plants, in the tens of thousands, were propagated and grown out for planting the estate, particularly the Approach Road in the early to mid-1890s. The nursery department was located in the wide bottoms on the north side of the Swannanoa River, between it and the Southern Railway tracks, and on both sides of the road linking the Old Ford gate of the estate with Victoria and thence Asheville. As landscape and horticultural work intensified during the 1890s the nursery operations expanded with additional glass houses and offices and soon came to include a botanical library and herbarium; it remained a viable, profitable part of the estate until the flood of 1916 effectively destroyed it.

Late in 1891 Mr. Olmsted recommended another young man to Mr. Vanderbilt to take charge of the forestry department. Gifford Pinchot came to Biltmore in February 1892 to supervise the forest management practices earlier proposed by Olmsted and initiated by Robert Douglas. Mr. Pinchot served as an active consultant at Biltmore for some three years, advised Mr. Vanderbilt on forestry matters until his death, and was an honorary pallbearer at his funeral. In spring 1895 he was succeeded by Carl Alwin Schenck, the first resident forester at Biltmore, the founder of the school of forestry on the estate which became the first in the United States, and the occupant, appropriately enough, of a cottage called Woodcote (#89).

Except for Mr. Thompson, whose contract was not renewed in late 1893, these men oversaw the construction of the chateau and development of Biltmore Estate through the critical years. However, it was Mr. Thompson who supervised the extensive grading in 1890 to prepare the site. Although the location of the chateau had been decided upon in October 1889, concerns about a firm base for the house and the amount of grading continued into January 1890 when Mr. Olmsted and Henry Sargent Codman accompanied Mr. Vanderbilt to Asheville. The present location, fixed on 30 January, required cutting down the hill, leveling to create the flat surface of the Esplanade, and extensive hauling and grading to create the level surfaces of the south and lower terraces. Meanwhile, the principal contract for the masonry with D.C. Weeks & Company was signed. Mr. Thompson, who had charge of the grading, also oversaw the creation of a gravity-fed water supply from nearby Busbee Mountain. He was involved, as well, in the planning and construction of the private railroad line which linked the station at Biltmore with the house site, by way of the home quarry. It was necessary to transport building materials and workmen to the site. The flat surface of the Esplanade became the principal work yard; the location of small offices, sheds for stonemasons, carpenters, and storage; and the site of open storage for the crushed and building stone, limestone, cement, brick, and iron used to construct the mansion. The railroad

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tracks entered the Esplanade at its northeast corner and carried in an arc to the front of the chateau. Flat cars pulled by the estate locomotive "Ronda" arrived on the Esplanade on 29 May 1890; a month and a half later, on 17 July, water was turned on and construction began.

During the five-year period from summer 1890 into fall 1895, a continuous, private building program, unprecedented in American history, was completed. It included the construction of the mansion (#22), the Rampe Douce (#23), the mansion gardens (#25), the Walled Garden, Conservatory, and gardener's cottage (#26a-c) at the heart of the estate, together with the Approach Road (#11), the estate road system with its brick and stone bridges (#6), and the estate office (#2) at Biltmore Village. In addition, a series of agricultural outbuildings were constructed, all now lost except for the sheep barn (#97) and the shepherd's cottage (#98). Also lost is River Cliff Cottage, often occupied by Mr. Olmsted and other guests, and now marked by the brick ruins of its foundation (#42), and Benjamin Julius Alexander's brick farm house (#151) which was refitted to designs prepared by Richard Sharp Smith for the use of Mr. Vanderbilt. This work is documented in extensive manuscript and iconographic records in the Biltmore Archives, the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers at the Library of Congress, the holdings which remain at the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site at Brookline, and the Richard Morris Hunt Collection at the American Architectural Foundation. To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the opening of the house at Christmas 1895, the Biltmore Estate Company commissioned John M. Bryan to write a history of the estate. *Biltmore Estate: The Most Distinguished Private Place* was published in 1994 and it stands as the most complete account, to date, of the history of the estate from 1888 through 1895.

Because of the need to secure the large mound of soil moved from the site of the Esplanade to form the base of the south terrace, work began first on its retaining walls and then advanced to the adjoining foundations of the mansion and then north to the stable block. Crushed stone and building stone was obtained from the home quarry, operated by Mr. Weeks, and from area quarries including the Pearson quarry and those of W.B. Troy at Balfour in Henderson County. Bricks and structural tile were produced by the estate brick works. The Hallowell Stone Company of Bedford, Indiana, supplied the limestone which sheathes the elevations of the mansion. Most of the cement was supplied by the J.B. Speed Company of Louisville, Kentucky. Orders for each of these materials, calculated to weekly usage, were placed, received, and accounted for by Mr. Smith, and unloaded at points on the Esplanade according to their use. The number of workmen, from manual laborers to the highly skilled stonemasons at the top of the hierarchy, varied according to the type of work being done, the weather, and the availability of materials. Most of these workmen, especially the most skilled, came to Asheville from New York, Washington, and other cities, and lodged at boarding houses, tenements, and other accommodations in Asheville and the vicinity. It is possible that some might well have occupied lodgings on the estate. On 28 May 1891 Mr. Smith wrote Mr. Hunt conveying Mr. Weeks' application "to me for a site convenient to the work to erect a negro boarding house. I wish you would consult with Mr. McNamee before he leaves New York and advise me of same at your earliest convenience" (Smith Letter Book). How this matter was resolved is not now known.

The construction of the house, from the basement through to the application of slates and copper cresting on the roof, is documented through hundreds of photographs which illustrate the systematic finish of the building floor to floor and that of the supporting structures. Letters exchanged between Mr. Smith and Mr. Hunt and the New York office also demonstrate the manner by which plans and detail drawings were produced for the building. The design of the elevations and the floor plans for the mansion had all been resolved and prepared in advance of construction; however, hundreds of detail and full-scale drawings of the finish inside and outside were produced as the walls of the mansion rose. Many of them, if not most, were produced by Warrington Gillette Lawrence, who appears to have been the chief draftsman for Biltmore in the Hunt office. Lawrence had traveled in France, Holland, and Belgium in the summer and early fall of 1889, visited many of the great houses known

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to Hunt and Vanderbilt, and recalled the experience at his drafting table as he prepared the drawings used by stonemasons and woodworkers to enrich the fabric of the mansion (Bryan, 45-46).

Whether the building of Biltmore House, and the adjoining, supporting structures, buildings, and gardens, was initially expected to be completed in the space of five years is not known; however, the pace of progress, particularly by late 1894 and early 1895, must have encouraged Mr. Vanderbilt to plan the opening of the house for Christmas 1895. In 1894 the walls of the mansion were essentially completed and it was put under roof. Attention was then focused on the finish work and interior decoration. Mr. Vanderbilt's Asheville Woodworking Company executed much of the architectural finish and paneling to drawings produced by the Hunt office, which also produced drawings for fittings and furnishings, including the chandeliers and sconces, and furniture throughout the principal reception rooms, executed by craftsmen in New York, New Jersey, and elsewhere.

Other craftsmen and artisans were called upon for particular features of the house, two bear mention. Raphael Guastavino (1842-1908) and his firm installed the tile ceilings in the corridor encircling the Winter Garden and the porte cochere (Bryan, 129). This work was relatively minor in the career of Guastavino; however, the sculptural work executed by Karl Theodore Francis Bitter (1867-1915) for Biltmore is acknowledged as the most distinguished of those produced for a series of Gilded Age houses (Plowden). Engaged by Hunt in 1894, the Austrian-born sculptor produced two important life-size figures for the exterior of the mansion and sculptural elements for three interior spaces, but only three of these works were in place by Christmas. In July 1895 Bitter sent life-size casts of St. Louis and Joan of Arc to Biltmore where they were carved and set into their niches in the stair tower in the fall. The bronze sculpture standing atop the marble fountain at the center of the Winter Garden, "Boy Stealing Geese," arrived at Biltmore in mid-December 1895.

George Vanderbilt had been acquiring furnishings for Biltmore House since his travels to France with Richard Morris Hunt in 1889; however, two of the now most-prized works of art at Biltmore were produced in the late spring of 1895. The relationship between Mr. Vanderbilt, his architect, and landscape architect was perhaps the most cordial of that enjoyed during any of the great building projects of the Gilded Age. In appreciation of their contributions to his house, and (now we know) to the history of architecture and landscape architecture in the United States, Mr. Vanderbilt commissioned portraits of Mr. Hunt and Mr. Olmsted by John Singer Sargent. On 15 May 1895, Mr. Hunt, his wife, Mr. Sargent, and Mr. Vanderbilt departed New York in his private railway car, the "Swannanoa," for Biltmore where they probably lodged in the brick farm house. Mr. Olmsted had been at Biltmore since February, and likely staying at River Cliff Cottage (Baker, 428-31). Ironically, the portraits, intended to celebrate their joint achievement, better record the visage of two men at the end of their professional lives. Richard Morris Hunt died on 31 July, and by the end of the year Olmsted had resigned from his practice due to progressive mental incapacities. Sargent placed Mr. Hunt beside the marble well-head on the front terrace of the house and used a palette of cool grey and tan tones for both flesh and stone, which lack warmth and Sargent's usual sympathy for his sitter. The portrait of Frederick Law Olmsted is altogether different in mood, coloration, and apparent affection for his subject. Sargent positioned Olmsted at the edge of the Approach Road--one of his great achievements on the estate--amidst the spring-blooming kalmias which he had planted by the thousands to enrich the gentle climb to the mansion. The portrait was begun with Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. posing for Mr. Sargent; however, within a week or so, Olmsted's health had declined to such an extent that he departed the estate for the last time; Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. later donned his father's suit and top coat and completed the required sittings for Sargent (Roper, 467-68). The portraits now hang in the second-floor living hall at Biltmore House.

During the course of 1895 little expense or effort was spared, as Charles McNamee and Richard Sharp Smith pushed the mansion and other estate projects toward completion; payrolls were increased where appropriate to

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attend to the many details and refinements begging attention. Like efforts under Mr. Gall, Mr. Beadle, and both Olmsted Sr. and Jr. for several months, were advancing the plantings and landscape work. At the same time construction was under way at All Souls Church in the village at Biltmore. Beginning in February, Thomas Morch, Mr. Vanderbilt's secretary, began sending crates and car lots of furnishings for the house from New York. These continued through nearly every month up to 5 December when he sent a shipment containing seven cases of table silver (Bryan, 138). Mr. Vanderbilt arrived at Biltmore in early October, and on the 26th he moved from the brick farm house into rooms in the bachelor's wing of the mansion. He probably spent the remainder of the fall there, arranging the furniture and preparing the house for its inaugural house party. However, as Christmas drew near, some parts of the house remained incomplete. The spaces reserved for Karl Bitter's carvings on the chimney panel, organ gallery, and thrones in the Banquet Hall were empty; the Library was little more than a shell. The Music Room would remain unfinished until 1976. The principal problem with the Library, aside from the ceiling, and with Mr. Vanderbilt's bedroom on the second story owed to very green French walnut shipped to Asheville which had to be cured before it was dressed into paneling and molded millwork. Mrs. Vanderbilt's bedroom was also unfinished as was the guest room, now the Louis XVI Bedroom, over the entrance hall. Whether Mr. Vanderbilt and his mother occupied their unfinished rooms or other guest rooms is unconfirmed.

Some members of the extended Vanderbilt family had visited at Biltmore while the house was under construction, Clarence Johnson Barker, Mr. Vanderbilt's first cousin, among them; however, there had been no such gathering of Vanderbilts in Asheville as assembled at the mansion on Christmas Eve 1895. Private railway cars brought Mrs. William Henry Vanderbilt, her sister Lucille Kissam Bromley, her sister-in-law Mrs. Kissam, Miss Kissam, and five of Mr. Vanderbilt's siblings with members of their families: Cornelius Vanderbilt II; William K. Vanderbilt; Frederick W. Vanderbilt; Emily Vanderbilt Sloane; Eliza Vanderbilt Webb, and "an army of servants" (*The New York Times*, 26 Dec. 1895). The house party disbanded before New Year's Day 1896 and returned to their several houses. Apparently there was never again such an assembly of Vanderbilts at Biltmore.

The momentum which advanced the house and grounds in 1895 was continued in 1896 when the principal work on the estate was completed except for certain individual projects, including portions of the interior decoration provided by Karl Bitter. Mr. Vanderbilt's bedroom and the Library were brought to completion, with Bitter's statues of the mythological goddesses mounted on either side of a tapestry panel in the Library overmantel. Bitter's plaster case of "The Return From the Hunt" for the Banquet Hall was carved in stone and mounted in the canted frieze above the triple fireplace. Another year would pass until summer 1897 when the five-panel frieze, "The Contest of the Minstrels," was installed in the balustrade of the organ gallery. In January 1898 Bitter's carved panels were installed in the Banquet Hall thrones; later that year Bitter's final project, the Venus and Vulcan andirons in iron and polished steel, arrived and were placed in the Library fireplace.

### Work Beyond the Chateau

The construction of the mansion at the heart of the Biltmore Estate, then unprecedented in American architectural history for its scale and expense, was the principal part of the estate development that occurred simultaneously on several fronts in the period from 1890 through 1896 and beyond. The principal projects were three in number: the acquisition and development of the Pisgah Forest lands which extended the acreage of the estate to some 120,000 acres; the first work toward the creation of Biltmore Village and construction there, together with planning for the Vernon Hill rental residences; and the first sustained construction of important, permanent buildings for the agricultural operations of the estate.

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While the residential core of Biltmore Estate in Buncombe County, making up some 15,000 to 18,000 acres, was put together by Charles McNamee and George Vanderbilt in a series of purchases, of mostly smallish tracts, sustained from 1888 into the early 1900s, the swell of the estate by another 100,000 or so acres occurred in two principal transactions in 1892 and 1895. The encouragement of Frederick Law Olmsted and the presence of Gifford Pinchot were instrumental to both acquisitions. On these lands, as well as on the home estate, Mr. Pinchot initiated the broad-scale forest management practices that saw their earliest fruition under the stewardship of forester Carl Alwin Schenck.

In August 1892, six months after his arrival at Biltmore, Mr. Pinchot was sent west into Henderson and Transylvania counties to examine a tract of some 20,000 acres which had been made available to Mr. Vanderbilt. The acreage was known as the "Pink Beds" for its expansive native covering of mountain laurel and rhododendron; Pinchot's examination proved it was also a remarkably fine forest of virgin hardwood trees. Mr. Vanderbilt acquired the "Pink Beds" in 1892-1893. Experience with the "Pink Beds" proved invaluable in 1894, when an adjoining tract of some 80,000 acres was offered to George Vanderbilt and Mr. Pinchot was dispatched to inspect it. The rich timber covering of this tract proved irresistible to both Pinchot and Vanderbilt, and it was acquired in 1895. With this purchase the estate assumed its largest extent and these boundaries, were held essentially intact until the mid 1910s when Mr. Vanderbilt's widow began conveying the majority of the lands, by then known as Pisgah Forest, to the federal government (Pinchot, 47-69; Buncombe County Deeds).

Enticed by the great scenic beauty of the new lands, Mr. Vanderbilt commissioned Richard Morris Hunt to design a rustic retreat even before he became the legal owner; surviving drawings by the Hunt office for Buckspring Lodge date to January and February 1895 (Biltmore Archives). Buckspring Lodge, a handsome, expansive Adirondack-style camp, was expanded to the designs of Hunt and Hunt in 1902 and it remained a possession of the family until 1962. It was subsequently destroyed by the National Park Service.

George Vanderbilt understood the value of first impressions. He appreciated and readily accepted Mr. Olmsted's advice on the creation of a village at the railroad stop first known as Best, later Bilton, and finally Biltmore. At the beginning of the 1890s, the village had an indefinite character as the location of some pre-Vanderbilt-era buildings, a store, boarding house, some few residences, the large industrial brick manufactory established for the estate, and the small railroad station. The inaccurate, persistent tradition that Biltmore Village was intended as a model community to house estate workers, based on English and French examples, may well derive from some dozen simple frame dwellings that were erected by Mr. Vanderbilt to house workers during construction of the estate. These T- and L-shaped one-story cottages were erected in an arc on the southeast side of what became All Souls Crescent in the Olmsted plan, and they appear in a documentary photograph (BHA4-01867) made in early 1896 when the tower of All Souls Church had reached its third stage. While substantially built, and complemented by freestanding shed-roof wood houses immediately to their rear, and shed-roof privies in another arc even further removed to the southeast, they were temporary buildings. Like the brick manufacturing complex, they were removed when their purpose had been served and today no visible trace of either remains.

Once the Olmsted firm completed the plan for the fan-shaped village, the first and most pressing need was for a permanent estate office. The Hunt office produced plans for a two-story building (#2) in the established Manorial Style in June 1893; however, construction was delayed until summer 1894 when its proposed location was changed to the present site, at the east end of Lodge Street, where it was completed in 1895. Meanwhile the office of Richard Morris Hunt designed a new railway passenger station, with brick-trimmed pebble-dash elevations and heavily bracketed eaves in 1894 in the prescribed Manorial Style. It was erected on the near footprint of the earlier station, on the south side of the tracks and on the north edge of the plaza which formed the central public space of the village. A church was proposed as the defining landmark in the village and



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Olmsted positioned it due south of the station, at the head of a true axis carrying through the plaza and Short Street to a fan-shaped lot whose perimeter mirrors the larger dimensions of the village. All Souls Church, one of the last monuments of Hunt's genius, was designed in 1895 and completed and consecrated in fall 1896.

The last of the major early buildings erected at Biltmore Village was the Entrance Lodge (#5), which stands at the west end of Lodge Street and removed from the west edge of the village. Olmsted planted his much-favored tulip poplars along the full length of Lodge Street, to frame the approach to the Entrance Lodge in a fashion that anticipates their use along the sides of the Esplanade to frame the façade of the mansion.

Olmsted had also recommended the erection of cottages on the hills overlooking Biltmore station: the purpose was twofold, first to create a sense of place and visible community for guests arriving at the station and, secondly, to provide congenial neighbors. The Shingle-style Kenilworth Inn, completed in 1890 on a hill to the northeast, achieved part of this goal. Mr. Vanderbilt, an investor in the hotel, also undertook a series of rental villas on Vernon Hill to the northwest of the station. The first of some half dozen houses was Washington Cottage, named for its first occupant William Herbert Washington, who may have been a friend of either Mr. McNamee or Mr. Vanderbilt. Plans for it were produced by Richard Morris Hunt's office in June 1895. (The Washington Cottage and all others on Vernon Hill except for Sunnicrest have been pulled down.)

When the nursery and agricultural operations began on the estate in 1889, they were mostly housed in buildings which met the expedient need, either reused from the earlier farms or newly-built. The shingle-clad sheep barn (#97) and shepherd's cottage (#98), both designed by Edward Burnett and erected in 1890-1892, are the first known substantial farm buildings erected by George Vanderbilt. He subsequently adopted a Manorial-style masonry program featuring the use of brick-trimmed pebble-dash walls, bracketed eaves, and tile roofs for the design of buildings both on his estate and in Biltmore Village. In 1896 Richard Howland Hunt produced plans for two important groups of agricultural buildings. The Truck Farm Building (#93) is a large U-shaped masonry building enclosing a brick paved court with a brick wall on the south side where glasshouses once stood. It stands on the south bank of the Swannanoa River at the north edge of expansive bottom lands where vegetables were long raised for market. In May 1896 Mr. Hunt drew the plans for the truck farmer's cottage (#94) immediately beside the truck farm. Mr. Vanderbilt's poultry operations were located on a hill, near the north edge of the estate, encircled in a bend of the French Broad River. While most of the hen and brooder houses designed by Hunt were frame buildings (and all now lost), the incubator house (#84), designed in June 1896, is a handsomely-detailed masonry building and surely one of the few such buildings of its type and period to survive in the nation.

Although the construction of these last named buildings continued into 1897, this period in the estate's history effectively closes in 1896 for two important reasons. In the summer of 1890 Richard Morris Hunt had sent Richard Sharp Smith to Asheville to supervise the construction of the mansion. As work on the mansion was drawing to a close in the spring of 1896, Mr. Smith replied by letter to Edward J. Harding, Mr. McNamee's assistant, in response to a query as to when he expected to depart Biltmore for a proposed trip to Europe (from which he would return to Asheville and set up his own independent office). He wrote, "So far as Estate work is concerned, I am unable to say as Mr. Hunt wishes me to stay until everything is completed at Biltmore House" (Smith Letter Book II). In the event Mr. Smith appears to have left the employ of Richard Howland Hunt in the summer of 1896 when the essential fabric of the mansion was completed.

The year 1896 also brought dramatic change to Mr. Vanderbilt's life. Having remained a bachelor, Mr. Vanderbilt had sought the company of companionable persons as friends and traveling companions. One such was his first cousin, Clarence Johnson Barker (186?-1896), the son of Vanderbilt's aunt Catherine Vanderbilt (Barker) LaFitte (1836-1887). Clarence Barker died of tubercular meningitis in Asheville on 11 February 1896;

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Mr. Vanderbilt accompanied the body back to New York two days later in the "Swannanoa" (*Daily Citizen*, 12 February 1896; *The New York Times*, 13 February 1896). His presence at Biltmore was remembered by the erection of the Clarence Barker Memorial Hospital and Dispensary in Biltmore Village and a memorial window in All Souls Church.

A second death in 1896 had an altogether greater impact on Mr. Vanderbilt. In his letter to James G. Gall on 30 October 1888, concerning his patron's plan to establish a winter residence in Asheville, Olmsted wrote:

"The place is considered to be the healthiest on the continent. It is for that reason, under good advice(,) Mr. V pitches upon it as a residence for himself and his mother; both being a little delicate."

The close relationship between mother and son cannot be overstated. On the working plans for the house Mrs. Vanderbilt's bedroom was to have been the room adjoining Mr. Vanderbilt's, a chamber now known as the Oak Sitting Room. Early in 1895, her bedroom was moved to the next adjoining room to the north, identified on the plans as her boudoir. On 16 August 1895, Warrington G. Lawrence prepared new drawings for the interior decoration, probably richer than those first proposed for the room, and it was fitted up in the Louis XV style in gold and purple. Whether she occupied the room at Christmas 1895 or on a visit in May 1896 is now unknown. Maria Louisa Kissam Vanderbilt, described in *The New York Times* as "the mother of the Vanderbilts," died unexpectedly on Friday afternoon, 6 November 1896, at Woodlea, the country home of her eldest daughter, Mrs. Elliott F. Shepherd, in Scarborough, New York. Mr. Vanderbilt, recently arrived at Biltmore from New York, returned to the city in the "Swannanoa" on Saturday together with his niece Florence Adele (Sloane) Burden, her husband, and the Reverend Dr. David H. Greer, rector of St. Bartholomew's Church, who was at Biltmore for the dedication of All Soul's Church on the 8th. The funeral was held from St. Bartholomew's on Tuesday, the 10th, and the body taken afterward to the Vanderbilt Mausoleum at New Dorp (*The New York Times*, 7, 8, and 11 Nov. 1896). As a measure of respect the grounds of the estate were closed to the public for two weeks (CM to editor; *Citizen*, 6 Nov. 1896). By the terms of his father's will George Vanderbilt now came into possession of the mansion at 640 Fifth Avenue.

### III. Biltmore Estate, A Baronial American Country Place, 1897-1914

George Vanderbilt occupied Biltmore House for some nineteen years beginning with his removal from the brick house to its bachelors' quarters in October 1895, up to his death in Washington, D.C., on 6 March 1914. His life here is almost equally divided into two parts: the years from 1895 up to 1902-1904 when improvements to the estate continued to be made and it reached its fullest development; and the final decade of his life when poor investments and financial losses depleted his capital and substantially reduced his income and style of living. During the first period, he continued to build, and he commissioned buildings from Richard Howland Hunt in New York and Richard Sharp Smith in Asheville. He also continued his long association with the office of Frederick Law Olmsted, which underwent a series of name changes as associates were brought into the firm. He sought their advice on locating buildings and landscaping; however, his commitment to the arboretum project effectively ended in this period, probably to the relief of all involved, now that its most ardent advocate, Mr. Olmsted Sr., was confined in a sanatorium.

In his personal life two important events occurred: in 1898 he was married to Edith Stuyvesant Dresser; and in 1900, at the age of thirty-seven, he became a father with the birth of a daughter. Following the financial reverses, he gave up his apartment in Paris, renting it in 1905/1906 to the novelist Edith Wharton, and he leased 640 Fifth Avenue in 1905 to the millionaire Henry Clay Frick who occupied it until moving to his great mansion on Fifth Avenue at 70th Street which is now the Frick Collection. Biltmore House remained a principal residence, Pointe d'Acadie at Bar Harbor his summer home, and he might have used one of the twin houses at

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645-647 Fifth Avenue. In 1912, two years before his death he purchased the former Washington, DC, home of Senator Matthew Stanley Quay (1833-1904) of Pennsylvania where he was recuperating from surgery and died unexpectedly at the age of fifty-one (District of Columbia Deeds, 3535/180-185).

George Vanderbilt apparently spent most of 1897 either in New York or traveling; he enjoyed a cruise in the Baltic and continued the holiday on the Continent during the summer. In December he sailed to India (*The New York Times*, 27 Dec. 1897). In his absence, and that of Charles McNamee, both in Europe, Mr. Harding was host at Biltmore to President McKinley on a quickly scheduled visit in mid-June (*The New York Times*, 15 June 1897). While in Europe, Mr. Vanderbilt is said to have first met Edith Stuyvesant Dresser who joined his party at the celebration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. Miss Dresser was born in 1873, the daughter of George Warren Dresser (1837-1883) and Susan Fish LeRoy (1834-1883), a direct descendant of Peter Stuyvesant, and a member of the Livingston and Fish families prominent in old New York society. Miss Dresser had spent her early years in New York and Newport; however, after the death of her parents she and her sisters had lived with their grandmother, Mrs. LeRoy, in Newport until her death in 1892. The siblings then moved to Paris and resided with their aunt, Mrs. Edward King. On his return from India, Mr. Vanderbilt returned to Paris and pressed his case as a suitor; the couple was engaged on 28 April 1898 (*New York Times*, 29 April 1898). They were wed in Paris in a civil ceremony on 1 June and at a service in the American Church of the Holy Trinity on the 2nd, attended by members of both the Vanderbilt and Dresser families; Joseph Howland Hunt, a partner in his father's architectural firm, was one of five groomsmen (*New York Times*, 2-3 June 1898). The couple arrived at Biltmore on Saturday, 1 October, in the "Swannanoa," and proceeded to the mansion by carriage.

Mr. McNamee, Dr. Schenck and Mr. Weston preceded the party, on horseback to the approach road, where an immense horseshoe of goldenrod bearing the legend "Good Luck" in bright flowers spanned the drive. At the arch representatives from the agricultural departments of the estate were massed, each group bearing a device typical of their labor. The men of the dairy wore suits of white duck and each one held the halter strap of a Jersey calf. The nurserymen tossed flowers to the bride as the carriage passed. . . .

At night the employes (sic) continued the festivities of their half-holiday, and were marshalled in the ranks of a torchlight procession by George F. Weston. Shortly after 9 o'clock the men met north of the esplanade, and Mr. and Mrs. Vanderbilt viewed the scene from the roof balcony over the main entrance of Biltmore House.

The Biltmore band, stationed in the tea garden at the top of the vista, began an inspiring march and the men with torches moved in converging lines from the glen and north roads to the winding steps of the ramp douce, where the march continued in crossing belts of fire, at each flight of steps, and finally into the length of the vista beneath its avenue of trees. A salute was given and the return was made in fanciful evolutions to the lawn.

The finale of the illumination came in showers of flaming stars from fireworks exploded at different points surrounding the mansion (*Asheville Daily Citizen*, 3 Oct. 1898).

On 22 August 1900 a daughter, Cornelia Stuyvesant Vanderbilt, was born to the couple at Biltmore House. Her birth was announced the next day on the front page of *The New York Times*. She would be their only child and the heir to Biltmore House.

In 1899 George Vanderbilt undertook a new series of improvements to the Biltmore Estate which proved to be the last major building program here in his lifetime. These included a residence for his nursery manager

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Chauncey Beadle, a group of cottages for farm workers--of which two survive (#82-83), the imposing Biltmore dairy barn complex (#78), and the horse barn and stable (#81). In Biltmore Village and on Vernon Hill, some two dozen cottages were erected as rental dwellings. His final known building project was Looking Glass Lodge, in the Pisgah Forest Pink Beds, for which Richard Howland Hunt and his brother prepared plans in April 1903. In the summer of 1899 Richard Sharp Smith prepared the plans and specifications for Mr. Beadle's house (#7) and stable (#8) and the contract for the same was awarded in September to William T. Hadlow who simultaneously was building some dozen or more cottages in Biltmore Village. It was completed and occupied in 1900; cottage construction in Biltmore Village and on Vernon Hill continued into 1901 and 1902 by local Asheville contractors.

Mr. Smith completed his simple plans and elevations for a "Cottage: Farm Development" in June 1900; two (#82-83) of the eight known "line houses" built to this model in a straight line to the west of the horse barn (#81) survive to the present. They are the oldest intact staff residences on the estate which continue to be occupied by employees. The plans for the large rectangular brick reservoir (#20) on Lone Pine Mountain, the highest point on the home estate, are dated July 1899; they are unsigned, and because of the reservoir's relative simplicity they were likely commissioned from Mr. Smith. The reservoir, fed from Busbee Mountain, and its companion brick filter house (#21) effectively solved the water supply problems which periodically had plagued the estate, particularly the mansion, since 1895.

In 1899-1900 Richard Howland Hunt completed the design of the last major buildings erected on the estate during Mr. Vanderbilt's lifetime; both were farm buildings and they reflected the final building up of the agricultural side of the estate at the turn of the century. Under George F. Weston's management, improvements to the Jersey herd and dairy operations took on increasing importance; the new dairy building and cow barns reflected Mr. Vanderbilt's commitment to the Biltmore Dairy which continued here until his grandson sold it in 1985. Surviving drawings for the dairy complex date to May through July 1900; however, preliminary plans had been developed, and they must have been in hand by 8 February when Mr. Hunt asked Mr. Smith to supervise the construction (RSS to RHH, 10 Feb. 1900). Building began in the summer, under Mr. Smith's supervision. Even as ground was being broken for the dairy buildings, Mr. Hunt was completing plans for the horse barn and stables (#81), dated 7 August 1900, for which grading began on the knoll to the northwest of the dairy group in January 1901. Both buildings were completed in 1902. The horse barn and stables survives, little altered, as one of the most important agricultural buildings of its period, while the former dairy was overbuilt and refitted as the estate winery in the early 1980s. The Olmsted Brothers' planting plan for the horse barn and stables, dated 24 December 1900, also treats the grounds of the five easternmost "line houses" which had been completed to date, and it notes the proposed site of three additional workers' cottages on the hillside to the northwest of the stable which appear in later documentary photographs. The firm also produced a planting plan for Woodcote (#89), the residence of Dr. Schenck, on 8 February 1901.

### The Biltmore Forest School, 1898-1913

The work of larger importance during this era, and the justification for Biltmore being designated a National Historic Landmark in 1963, is its role in the history of forest management and conservation in the United States and as the site of the first school of forestry in the nation. From his initial visit to the property in 1888, Frederick Law Olmsted realized that the first and best use of the majority of the estate lands, which then comprised some 2,000 acres, was to replant, renew, and maintain them as a great forest along scientific principles. Doing so would reclaim hundreds of acres that had been overcut and laid waste by the poorest farming methods, provide a pleasing landscape for the house and some revenue for its owner, and, through example, encourage private forestry at a level heretofore unseen in America. Prior to writing his now famous letter of 12 July 1889, Olmsted had engaged Robert Douglas, a now little known pioneer forester, to survey the Vanderbilt holding,

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and report to him. Having utilized Douglas's findings in his letter, he later gained Mr. Vanderbilt's approval for a series of plantings by Douglas which became the first instance of private reforestation in the country under a written scientific management plan. In support of his advice, Mr. Olmsted sent his patron a copy of H.W.S. Cleveland's ground-breaking pamphlet *The Culture and Management of Our Native Forests for Development as Timber or Ornamental Wood* (1882) and his own *Observations on the Treatment of Public Plantations, More Especially Relating to the Use of the Axe* which he coauthored with J.B. Harrison and published in 1889. Realizing the scale of work required a professional on-site forester, Mr. Olmsted recommended Gifford Pinchot to Mr. Vanderbilt who, in turn, offered a position to Pinchot in December 1891. Pinchot's role in the history of conservation and forestry is well-documented in public and private records; his autobiography, *Breaking New Ground*, was published in 1947.

Gifford Pinchot took up his duties on the estate in February 1892, worked essentially full-time on the estate for about a year, and in 1893 became a New York-based consultant on forest management to Mr. Vanderbilt and others, including Dr. William Seward Webb; in 1898 he succeeded Dr. Bernard E. Fernow as the fourth head of the Division of Forestry in the United States Department of Agriculture. Under Pinchot's watch at Biltmore, Mr. Vanderbilt acquired the tracts that became Pisgah Forest while continuing forest renewal on the home estate. He, too, realized that Biltmore needed a full-time estate-based forester, and that he was not that man.

As events proved, Gifford Pinchot's second important contribution to the history of forestry in America was his recommendation of Carl Alwin Schenck to Mr. Vanderbilt. Mr. Pinchot had turned for advice to Sir Dietrich Brandis (1824-1907), who is generally acknowledged as having introduced scientific forestry in the English-speaking nations and a man whom Pinchot labeled "the grandfather of American forestry." In the summer of 1889, Carl Schenck, then a student at the University of Giessen, had accompanied Mr. Brandis through the experimental forests in western Europe and made a strong impression. Mr. Vanderbilt offered the position of forester at Biltmore to Dr. Schenck by telegram in January 1895.

When Carl Alwin Schenck (1868-1955) arrived in America in April 1895 and continued on to Biltmore he became the third professionally trained forester in the county; Pinchot, who had studied at the French forest school at Nancy, and Mr. Fernow, the head of the federal Division of Forestry, were the first two. On arrival at Biltmore, Schenck stayed with the Olmsteds at River Cliff Cottage (#42) until moving into Woodcote (#89) where he would host Charles Sprague Sargent (1841-1927), the director of the Arnold Arboretum, and John Muir. He was to be paid a salary of \$2,500 a year with an office on the second story of the estate office building (#2) in the village. During his first years on the estate, Mr. Schenck traveled the breadth of Vanderbilt's 120,000 acres, observing conditions and supervising timber harvesting, and discussing his findings with Pinchot who came down on consultation. He also shared his knowledge in a more practical way with his assistants through lectures, and he took on students on an informal basis as early as 1896. An early mention of this practice appears in a response Mr. McNamee made on 5 November 1896 to an inquiry by Mr. F. deGaris of New York.

Answering your questions, I will say that there is no established school for forest culture at Biltmore. The resident forester had last year two or three students, and I think possibly he would not mind having a like number during the coming year, if they were sufficiently advanced in the study of natural science and were personally agreeable men. It is not an established feature of the Estate, however, to have students, and therefore it is entirely personal to the forester (Estate Letter Book).

Nearly three years experience in Pisgah Forest and the home estate came to fruition in 1898 in two forms: the decision to establish a school of forestry at Biltmore; and the completion of a working plan for Pisgah Forest which was submitted to Mr. Vanderbilt on 1 October 1898 and practiced until Mr. Schenck's departure in 1909.

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The Biltmore Forest School, the first school of forestry established in the United States, operated from the opening session in the fall of 1898 through the spring and summer of 1909. The one-year course consisted of lectures held in the mornings in Schenck's office with visits onto the estate in the afternoon, together with extended field visits into Pisgah Forest to experience forest management in practice. Some 365 men studied at the Biltmore Forest School of which 300 are said to have completed the course and half of that number, employed in forestry work. In 1901 the school and the forestry department had grown to the extent that Mr. Vanderbilt commissioned Richard Sharp Smith to design a combination office and classroom building. Completed in 1902, it was a one-story four-room building in the prescribed estate fashion with brick trimmed pebble-dash elevations and a tile roof; it stood on the north side of the Swannanoa River just north of the entrance lodge. The school was conducted in the new building from the fall of 1902 into 1909.

As the first school of forestry in the United States, the Biltmore Forest School was soon joined by the New York State College of Forestry later in 1898 and a school of forestry at Yale University established by a gift of \$150,000 by the Pinchot family in 1900. The Biltmore Forest School might have continued longer were it not for financial reverses suffered by Mr. Vanderbilt in 1902-1903 and again in 1907, when a national depression forced down timber prices, and the competition from the forestry schools at academic institutions. The school served an important role in training foresters who went to work in both private industry and government service. It did not have the academic status enjoyed by the school at Yale which was a graduate program offering a master's degree in forestry; but Yale could not match the Biltmore School which enjoyed the splendid Pisgah Forest as a campus for field study. An emerging professional competitiveness and difference in philosophy with Pinchot also had its results, particularly after Mr. Pinchot wrote Mr. Vanderbilt encouraging him to close the school. Pinchot's advice was not entirely unselfish since increased attendance at the Pinchot-supported program at Yale would have been a likely result. However, it was finally the tensions deriving from the straightened financial situation on the estate that precipitated the end of the school.

In his memoir, *Cradle of Forestry: The Biltmore Forest School, 1898-1913*, Schenck recalled events which occurred following his return to Biltmore on 25 February 1908 from Europe where he and six students had spent a month or more reviewing Austrian forestry practices in the Carpathian Mountains. A change in tone and mood had swept over Biltmore and Mr. Vanderbilt is said to have told Schenck, "Try to sell Pisgah Forest for me. I will pay you the usual agent's commission on the purchase price." Schenck never followed upon the plea. Tensions eased for a while, and Schenck was able to replace his assistant forester, Dr. Clifton Durant Howe who went to the University of Toronto, with Dr. Homer D. House. Appearances must have improved through 1908, and Dr. Schenck carried through with the Biltmore Forest Festival, a celebration of the 10th anniversary of the school and the 20th anniversary of forest management on the estate held over the Thanksgiving weekend, 26-29 November 1908. Thanksgiving Day and Friday were given over to touring the forest plantations and farms on the home estate, with an excursion to Pisgah Forest by train on Saturday. The "Farewell" scheduled for Sunday was altogether too ironic a choice of words.

In retrospect, the Biltmore Forest Festival was Dr. Schenck's swan song, although the forestry school would continue with little apparent threat of closing until the events of 24 April 1909. Over time friction developed between Mr. Beadle, who had become the de facto manager of the estate after Mr. McNamee's departure in 1904, and Mr. Schenck. A confrontation between the two men became physical on the 24th; on 3 June, Mr. Schenck was found guilty of a charge of assault and battery by Mr. Beadle and fined \$1.00. The final break, and Dr. Schenck's dismissal, however, came after Mr. Vanderbilt learned on his return in May from a near year in Europe, that his forester had leased the hunting and fishing rights in Pisgah Forest to a Chicago hunting club for \$10,000 a year for ten years (*The New York Times*, 2 July 1908, 28 Apr., 2 June 1909). Whether Dr. Schenck had permission, as he insisted, to enter into such a contract was not resolved between the two men. Apparently the larger concern for Mr. Vanderbilt was that such an agreement could stand in the way of his ability to sell

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Pisgah Forest. Biltmore Forest School ceased to be associated with the Biltmore Estate. That fall, Dr. Schenck and some forty students sailed to Europe, and for the next four years it operated in odyssey-like fashion until closing in 1913 and Dr. Schenck's return to Germany in 1914. Dr. Schenck's lawsuits against Mr. Vanderbilt over the dismissal were settled out of court with an undisclosed, estimated payment to Schenck of some \$12,000 to \$15,000 (*The New York Times*, 9 Aug. 1910).

George Vanderbilt's Last Years at Biltmore

Throughout this period, visitors continued to enjoy the grounds of the estate on its open days, and they took pleasure in its gardens, farms, lakes, and woodlands. Initially passes were distributed to the best hotels and boarding houses in Asheville or honored through letters of introduction from persons known to Mr. Vanderbilt and Mr. McNamee. By 1900 interest in the estate had grown to such an extent that passes were only available at the estate office for Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. Asheville-based photographers including T.H. Lindsay had made views of the house and offered them for sale in the form of both prints and postal cards. In 1900, *Biltmore: Photo-Gravures*, a handsome pamphlet with eighteen views of the mansion, buildings, and grounds, was published by H. Taylor Rogers and available at his book and stationery shop in Asheville. Other promotional books, pamphlets, and brochures promoting the area also included views of the house.

After 1902, the financial underpinnings of the estate steadily weakened. The financial difficulties began in March 1902, with problems at the Vanderbilt-controlled Metropolitan Bank in Tacoma, Washington. The greater, crippling loss came with the United States Shipbuilding debacle, in which he is said to have bought 100,000 shares in a company headed by his brother-in-law, Daniel LeRoy Dresser (*The New York Times*, 30 Mar. 1902). This investment was a complete loss. In 1905 two titans of American financial history came to Mr. Vanderbilt's aid in ways that enhanced their interests as well. Maintenance of both 640 Fifth Avenue and Biltmore was then beyond his reduced means. The mansion at 640 Fifth Avenue, the residence of William Henry Vanderbilt, had earlier appealed to another industrial baron of the Gilded Age, who was anxious to move his family from Pittsburgh and establish his presence in New York. In 1905 Henry Clay Frick (1849-1919) assumed a ten-year lease of the property, and occupied it until 1914 when he moved to the house at One East Seventieth Street that is now the Frick Collection (*The New York Times*, 16 Apr. 1905). In a second effort to raise funds, Mr. Vanderbilt sold his collection of Rembrandt and Durer prints to J. Pierpont Morgan (1837-1913) for \$150,000 (Strouse, 553). Many of these prints, woodcuts, and engravings had formed part of the inaugural exhibition of the American Fine Arts Society in December 1892; at the end of the month Mr. Vanderbilt announced his gift of \$100,000 to the society to pay for its newly-built gallery and headquarters on West Fifty-seventh Street (*The New York Times*, 23, 31 Dec. 1892). The group of 112 works by Rembrandt was surely his most valuable art holding and it came to form a part of Morgan's collection that became the finest Rembrandt collection in the United States.

Ironically, 1905 was also the year that George and Edith Vanderbilt were host to a difficult guest, and one whose criticisms of the house have been repeated to the present. When discovered by the Vanderbilts, they must have appeared pointlessly cruel. Henry James (1843-1916) arrived in the midst of a snowstorm on 3 February having recently lost an upper front tooth; his chronic gout flared-up almost immediately. For a fastidious man, his compromised appearance, pain in moving about the housebound splendor, and uninteresting fellow house-guests were a trial instead of a pleasant respite. Before a week was out he went on to Charleston, South Carolina. In 1972 his biographer simply noted that James "had come at the wrong season. The place might have some beauty in the warmer time of the year" (Edel, 269-72). Two years later Mr. James was entertained in another residence of Mr. Vanderbilt, his apartment at 58 Rue de Varenne, which was passing through his fingers; this time his hostess was their mutual friend Edith Wharton who was taking up the lease, and he remained in "gilded capacity" for a fortnight (Edel, 340-41).

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In retrospect George Vanderbilt's support of his forestry department in the first years of financial distress was likely encouraged by the income derived from Schenck's systematic harvesting of timber. However, in the wake of the panic of 1907, timber prices fell and lumber simply could not be sold at a profit. Although Mr. Schenck did not act on the beseechment to sell Pisgah Forest in 1908, it was a portent of things to come after he departed Biltmore.

The relief offered by the rental of the family mansion and sale of prints in 1905 was short-lived. In the fall of 1905 George Vanderbilt undertook a series of retrenchments and reductions in expenditures on the estate (*The New York Times*, 15 Oct. 1905). George F. Weston, the manager of the farm operations since 1895, was dismissed, either in late 1905 or early 1906. In fall 1906 Mr. Vanderbilt gave up the extensive decade-old poultry operation and its manager J.R. Livingston was let go (*The New York Times*, 9 Nov. 1906). The next year he faced questions about the amount of taxes paid in Buncombe County, while it was reported that he planned to erect a house in Washington, D.C. where he maintained an apartment at 1709 New Hampshire Avenue (*The New York Times*, 20 Jan., 3 Mr., 6 July 1907). As an economy measure he closed Biltmore House in the summer of 1908, dismissed servants, sold its pleasure horses, and in early July sailed to Europe where he remained until May 1909 (*The New York Times*, 2 July 1908). Occasional sales of outlying parts or edge-holdings of the estate, occurring now for some years, were increased in 1911 with the sale to Joseph S. Silverstein of timber rights on some 20,000 acres of the "Gloucester timber tract" forming part of Pisgah Forest and the sale of Spurwood and Ridgelawn, two of his rental cottages on Vernon Hill (*The New York Times*, 3 June, 4 Aug. 1911, Buncombe County Deeds, 172/301, 494). All these efforts were generally small in nature compared to the sale of timber rights in a vast 68,000-acre tract of Pisgah Forest lying in four counties (Buncombe, Henderson, Haywood, and Transylvania) to Louis D. Carr in fall 1912 for \$816,000 (*The New York Times*, 21 Sept. 1912, Buncombe County Deeds, 161/518). This timber contract specified the payment of \$10,000 on signing, a payment of \$10,797.80 by 1 May 1913, and the first of thirty-nine, twice-yearly payments of \$20,797.80 by 1 November 1913. Under the contract, designed to provide annual income of \$41,595.60 through 1932, George Vanderbilt would only receive \$41,595.60 before his death. Although the timber sale eased financial problems on the one hand, it cast its cloud over the larger resolution. Mr. Vanderbilt's offer of the entire estate, save the mansion and the surrounding 1,000 acres to the federal government as a part of the Appalachian Forest Reserve was turned down on 23 June 1913; the price and conditions relating to the Carr timber sale convinced the National Forest Commission against the purchase (*The New York Times*, 17 Sept. 1912, 24 June 1913). Meanwhile, in May 1912, Mr. Vanderbilt purchased the house at 1612 K Street, NW, in Washington, D.C., from the estate of Agnes Barclay Quay, Senator Quay's widow. The purchase was financed by a \$65,000 mortgage.

George Washington Vanderbilt died unexpectedly on Friday afternoon, 6 March 1914, at his Washington residence. Some ten days previous he had become ill, sought medical advice, and was diagnosed with appendicitis. The appendectomy was successful, and he was making a full recovery when he collapsed and died before his doctor arrived. The cause was heart failure. *The New York Times* reported his death on the front page the following day, and death notices, obituaries, and articles appeared in newspapers throughout the eastern United States that day and thereafter. A number raised speculation as to what would happen to the Biltmore Estate. Funeral services, presided over by the Reverend Rodney Rush Swope, rector of All Souls Church, were held in Washington in the Bethlehem Chapel of the National Cathedral at noon on Monday, the 9th. His body was taken by train to New York where the funeral party gathered at the home of his sister, Emily Sloane, at Two West Fifty-second Street. The body and funeral party were transported by ferry to Staten Island, where Mr. Vanderbilt's body was placed in the Vanderbilt Mausoleum (*The New York Times*, 2, 7-8, 10-12 March 1914).

*The New York Times* printed the complete text of his will on 13 March, and cited the estimated value of his estate at \$50,000,000. The actual value of his estate, personal and real, including the \$5,000,000 trust was probably closer to \$10,000,000. The bequests were predictable. Mrs. Vanderbilt received the Washington and



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Maine residences, \$250,000 in cash, the interest from a \$1 million trust fund to be established on her behalf, and Pisgah Forest. The income from the \$5 million trust established by his father passed to his thirteen-year-old daughter Cornelia. Four paintings were distributed in the will: Whistler's portrait of Mrs. Vanderbilt was given to Cornelia; his portrait, also by Whistler, was given to his widow. Five small bequests, including a \$2,000 a year annuity to Charles McNamee, were left to friends or other family members. The residual estate, including Biltmore Estate, was left in trust for Cornelia. He named his widow and his brother Frederick W. Vanderbilt as executors of a will that had been signed on 18 December 1913, less than three months before his death. By the terms of his father's will, the mansion at 640 Fifth Avenue, \$1,000,000, and the art collection assembled by William Henry Vanderbilt, in which he held a life estate, passed to his nephew Cornelius Vanderbilt III (1873-1942). When the will was filed in Buncombe County, documents showed the real estate comprising the home estate and Pisgah Forest valued at \$2,592,306, and personal property, including livestock, furnishings, and works of art, automobiles, jewelry, cash, and accounts receivable, valued at \$149,715 (Buncombe County Wills: H/248-272).

#### IV. Biltmore--An Estate Held in Trust and the Home of the Cecils, 1914-1932

A month and a half later, on 1 May, and anxious to raise cash, Mrs. Vanderbilt wrote James Wilson, the Secretary of Agriculture, and again pressed the government to buy Pisgah Forest.

This letter constitutes my formal offer for the sale of Pisgah Forest to the Government for National Forest purposes. Should the Government fail to acquire it, I must dispose of Pisgah Forest in some other way. I hope earnestly that, in view of the terms of my offer, no such contingency may arise.

Mr. Vanderbilt was the first of the large forest owners in America to adopt the practice of forestry. He has conserved Pisgah Forest from the time he bought it up to his death, a period of nearly twenty five years, under the firm conviction that every forest owner owes it to those who follow him, to hand down his forest property to them unimpaired by wasteful use. I keenly sympathize with his belief that the private ownership of forest land is a public trust, and I probably realize more keenly than any one else can do, how firm was his resolve never to permit injury to the permanent value and usefulness of Pisgah Forest. I wish earnestly to make such disposition of Pisgah Forest as will maintain in the fullest and most permanent way its national value as an object lesson in forestry, as well as its wonderful beauty and charm; and I realize that its ownership by the Nation will alone make its preservation permanent and certain.

Accordingly I have decided to make as large a contribution as I can, in order to help bring this result about. I offer Pisgah Forest at a total price over two hundred thousand dollars below that on the basis of which negotiations were entered into with the government before my husband's death, my offer to the Government of Pisgah Forest now being at a price of five dollars per acre.

I make this contribution towards the public ownership of Pisgah Forest with the earnest hope that in this way I may help to perpetuate my husband's pioneer work in forest conservation, and to insure the protection and the use and enjoyment of Pisgah Forest as a National Forest, by the American people for all time.

This offer is made, except for the reduction in the price of the land, in accordance with the terms of the option executed by Mr. Vanderbilt and myself on March 12, 1913. . . . In the event that my offer is accepted, I shall be glad for the Government to assume control of Pisgah Forest as soon as it may desire.

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In the same event, it would be a source of keen gratification to me if the tract retained, as a National Forest, the title of "Pisgah Forest," which my late husband gave it (Biltmore Archives).

No one could doubt the meaning, explicit and implicit, of this letter, and Mr. Wilson moved toward the purchase of Pisgah Forest. Before the month was out the United States Forestry Commission agreed to the purchase of 86,700 acres for \$433,851 (*The New York Times*, 22 May 1914). Edith Vanderbilt conveyed Pisgah Forest to the United States of America in a series of deeds during the years up to 1921. As executors of Mr. Vanderbilt's will, Edith Vanderbilt and Frederick W. Vanderbilt also executed deeds for the Pisgah Forest property to the United States to establish clear title to the property (Buncombe County Grantor Index).

The size of the estate was further reduced by the sale of two adjoining parts of the property in 1920: Biltmore Village and acreage on the northeast edge which was developed as Biltmore Forest. In 1896, a few days prior to the consecration of All Souls Church, Mr. Vanderbilt had conveyed the church and its site to the trustees (Buncombe County Deeds, 99/61). On 31 August 1915 Mrs. Vanderbilt conveyed the property on which the Clarence Barker Memorial Hospital stood to the institution (Buncombe County Deeds, 203/442). Mrs. Vanderbilt sold the remainder of the village, commercial buildings, and rental dwellings to George Stevens (Henry B. Stevens) in June 1920 (Buncombe County Deeds, 241/393, 424).

The larger sale, on 1 October 1920, consisted of 1,461.32 acres along the northeast edge of the estate which was developed as an exclusive residential subdivision (Buncombe County Deeds, 244/56-61). The association with the estate was reinforced in its name, Biltmore Forest, and the naming of two of its central avenues, Vanderbilt and Stuyvesant Roads. Busbee Road, in Biltmore Forest, linked the park with the estate and a new, handsome gate house (#19) was erected just inside the gate marking the boundary. Biltmore Forest was announced with fanfare in both the *Asheville Sunday Times* and the *Asheville Sunday Citizen* on 20 June 1920. Lots were to be of no less than two acres and houses were to cost no less than \$15,000. "The idea is to throw restrictions around the property so that wealthy people from all sections of the country will be attracted here where they can purchase land and develop their own estates" (*Sunday Citizen*). Four partners, Burnham S. Colburn, Thomas Wadley Raoul, William A. Knight, and Junius G. Adams, joined the estate as developers of the Biltmore Estate Company to which Mrs. Vanderbilt conveyed the first tract on 1 October 1920 (Buncombe County Deeds, 244/56). Confusion between the Vanderbilt estate, Biltmore Forest, and the Biltmore Estate Company, resulted in a name change for the real estate venture to Biltmore Forest Holding Company. It, in turn, received title to the original subdivision acreage and additional tracts in 1921 (Buncombe County Grantee and Grantor Indexes). A second promotional article appeared in the *Asheville Sunday Times* on 24 October and advised readers of handsome houses being planned by Mr. Raoul, Dr. Carl V. Reynolds, Dr. William Beverly Mason, and Mr. Colburn. Dr. Mason built a replica (Gunston Hall, NR, 1991) of his ancestral home, Gunston Hall, while Richard Sharp Smith was the architect of Mr. Colburn's English manorial residence. Chauncey Beadle supervised the layout of the subdivision and assisted lot buyers with the landscaping of their grounds. The cachet of Biltmore Forest was further secured in 1924 when Mrs. Vanderbilt began the construction of The Frith, a Mediterranean Revival-style residence for herself, at the southwest border to designs prepared by Bruce Kitchell of West Palm Beach.

During the years immediately following Mr. Vanderbilt's death, Biltmore House was relatively little occupied by his widow and daughter except for occasional visits. Mrs. Vanderbilt appears to have preferred Washington, while her daughter was enrolled in Miss Madeira's School, and New York. Over time, they appear to have shifted their occasional use of the house to the late spring, summer, or fall, when, in fact, the estate was at its best. The one significant construction project during this period was a swimming pool for which Charles E. Waddell, an Asheville-based engineer, prepared plans dated 17 June 1920. Measuring approximately forty-five by one-hundred twenty feet, it was erected in the center of the South Terrace.

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On 29 April 1924, Cornelia Vanderbilt married John Francis Amherst Cecil (1890-1954), the third son of Lord William Cecil, at All Souls Church (*The New York Times*, 30 April 1924). He was educated at Eton and Oxford, and entered the diplomatic service in 1913. In 1923 he became first secretary and head of chancery at the British Embassy in Washington where he met Miss Vanderbilt. The couple occupied Biltmore House as their residence. On 22 October 1925, Edith Vanderbilt, having been a widow for eleven years, was married in London to Peter Goelet Gerry (1879-1957), who was then serving in the second of his four terms as United States Senator from Rhode Island. Mr. Gerry, six years her junior, was the son of Elbridge Thomas Gerry of New York, for whom Richard Morris Hunt had designed a Fifth Avenue mansion (2 East Sixty-first Street, now lost) while engaged with the Biltmore work. Thereafter Mrs. Gerry spent most of her time either in Washington, where her husband served as a senator until 1947, or in Providence, where the senator maintained a residence and where Mrs. Gerry's sister, Mrs. John Nicholas Brown, lived. The Gerrys also had a country place, Lake Delaware Farm, at Delhi, New York; The Frith and Buckspring Lodge, which Mrs. Gerry owned until her death, were occupied on visits to Asheville.

The second year of Cornelia's marriage to John Cecil was auspicious: a son, George Henry Vanderbilt Cecil, was born to the couple in February; she came into possession and control of the trust established for her under the terms of her father's will on her twenty-fifth birthday, 22 August 1925; and the couple were in London in the fall for her mother's wedding. A second son, William Amherst Vanderbilt Cecil was born in August 1928. The Biltmore Dairy Farm, alone of the agricultural operations, continued in force and the appearance of some of the estate buildings, including the barns at Plateau Farm (#106) and Inanada (#128), together with the terra cotta block silo at Plateau (#108), suggest they were built in the 1920s. Plans for two buildings on the estate survive. In July 1922 the firm of Smith (Richard Sharp) & Carrier completed the design of a rustic log forest ranger's cottage which was built off Racket Club Road on the part of the divided estate land now belonging to George Cecil; it is the only building of any note which stands outside the residual estate included in this document. Eight years later, in August 1930, Charles N. Parker produced drawings for a farm cottage on Dairy Road (#71). By 1932 Mrs. Cecil and her two sons are said to have been living mostly in Paris and London.

As the decade of the 1920s drew to a close and the effects of the stock market crash in 1929 deepened toward the Depression, important changes occurred in the life of the Cecils at Biltmore Estate, in the Asheville community, and throughout the nation. The financial situation on the estate and in the Asheville community, which suffered a severe depression and total collapse in the real estate market, prompted the opening of Biltmore Estate to paying visitors. The first of a stream of the interested, appreciative, and the curious drove through the gates on the estate on 15 March 1930 and paid \$2 each for the pleasure of viewing the principal reception rooms on the first floor, the important bedrooms above, the gardens, and the expansive grounds of the home estate. Reduced prices were established for children, convention visitors in Asheville, and school groups.

Response to the opening was immediate and very favorable; between 15 and 31 March, 2,474 people visited the estate. The visitation in April was 4,533 (JGA to Wm. H. Taylor, 5 May 1930). While Mr. Adams understood the value of satisfied visitors as "walking advertisements," he appreciated the need for an appealing brochure that could be distributed at many points. On 8 May an order for 25,000 copies of a four-page brochure was placed, and the next month 75,000 deckle-edge colored postal cards of twenty-five different views were ordered from a Swiss printing house. By 23 July, a second order for 25,000 folders was placed (Adams correspondence, Biltmore Archives). Packaged sets of photographic views were also available for sale. During the first year 40,065 people visited the estate, of which 29,060 were adults paying the \$2 fee (CDB to David Fairchild, 3 Apr. 1931).

Cornelia Vanderbilt Cecil's marriage, like that of her cousin Consuelo's to Charles Spencer-Churchill, an aristocratic Englishman, failed, and by 1930 she and Mr. Cecil appear to have begun leading separate lives. By

this time Cornelia Cecil had decided to live abroad. As part of their divorce settlement, trusts were created to hold the assets of the estate on 1 April 1932, one of which was The Biltmore Company; the trustees were Mrs. Gerry, Mr. Cecil, Junius Greene Adams (and Mrs. Cecil). Mr. Adams was named president of The Biltmore Company, and it was in that role that he governed the estate for the next three decades.

#### V. Biltmore Estate Again Held in Trust as The Biltmore Company, 1932-1950

Following the financial reversals George Vanderbilt experienced in the opening decade of the twentieth century, Biltmore Estate suffered two additional periods of crisis in its history prior to the division of 1979. In similar circumstances such misfortunes would spell the end, or sure decline, of contemporary houses and estates, just as fate would suffocate the great masterpieces of a slightly later date, including among others Whitemarsh Hall, the grand classical mansion designed by Horace Trumbauer for Edward T. Stokesbury. Biltmore House and Biltmore Estate were preserved from such a bitter end in both instances largely through the cooperation of three people who long figured in its history: Edith Stuyvesant (Dresser) Vanderbilt Gerry, Chauncey Delos Beadle, and Junius Green Adams.

In the first instance, as has been described herein, Mr. Vanderbilt's unexpected death in March 1914 left his family in straitened circumstances. His heir and his only daughter, Cornelia, was then thirteen years of age, his liquid assets were insufficient to cover his bequests, the house in Washington, D.C. that he devised to his widow was mortgaged, and the expenses of the house in Washington, the summer house in Maine, and Biltmore Estate could not be easily met. Then there was the rising uncertainty in Europe, which with the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary on 28 June 1914, resulted in World War I. Edith Vanderbilt's bold decision to sell the Pisgah Forest lands to the United States both saved those great woodlands and provided a real degree of financial ease. Through this period, and for long years afterward, Mrs. Vanderbilt could count on Mr. Beadle for the best management of the estate. It was then that she also came to know Junius Green Adams, a young attorney, who became a trusted advisor and figured in the life of the estate until his death in 1962.

As trustees of The Biltmore Company, the trio who had exercised stewardship of the estate between 1914 and 1924 were again called upon in 1932 to manage it and its assets for Mrs. Cecil's two young sons who were both under the age of eight. Once again, but now in a different fashion, Edith Vanderbilt Gerry effectively resumed the role of mistress of Biltmore Estate and served as a trustee of The Biltmore Company until her death. The responsibility was one she easily understood and carried out in many ways that encouraged a high degree of superintendency on the estate. Although the actual buildup of the dairy operations on the estate in the 1930s and 1940s were effected by Mr. Adams, who came to reside on the estate, Mrs. Gerry exercised a strong interest in the operations and their success. She and Senator Gerry had their own agricultural estate at Lake Delaware, Delhi, New York. Surviving correspondence in the Biltmore Archives indicates her genuine interest in the successes at both establishments. During this period Senator and Mrs. Gerry maintained a residence at The Frith, which is now the residence of William A.V. Cecil.

In the history of Biltmore Estate, the single figure who spans virtually its entire period of significance, 1888-1950, is Chauncey Delos Beadle, who came here to represent the Olmsted interests in 1890 and remained on the estate until his death in 1950. His tenure links the sequential stages in the estate's history, and, after Frederick Law Olmsted, he is the person who has most affected the appearance of the estate gardens and grounds. Mr. Beadle served as head of the nursery department from 1890 until the flood of July 1916 destroyed the enterprise. After Mr. McNamee's departure in 1904, he came to exercise supervisory responsibilities, and was named superintendent of the estate; he utilized his managerial skills and horticultural knowledge in the service of Biltmore until his retirement in 1945, and unofficially until his death on 4 July 1950. A bronze marker was

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unveiled on 1 April 1940 in honor of his fiftieth anniversary of service to the estate; it was located in the Azalea Garden (#32b) which he created as a link between the Spring Garden (#32a) and the Bass Pond (#32). On the occasion of his retirement in 1945, he was presented with a check for \$5,000 by Mr. Adams to support the writing and publication of his proposed book on azaleas. Although the book was never completed, Mr. Beadle's larger accomplishment is visible at nearly every turn on the estate whose physical appearance and horticultural health was his life-long concern.

In retrospect, the survival of Biltmore Estate and this residual 6,825 acres, from the serious onset of George Vanderbilt's financial distress in 1902 to the early 1950s, when his grandson, George Henry Vanderbilt Cecil, returned to the estate and took up a part of its management, owes in very large measure to the stewardship of Chauncey Delos Beadle. With the departure of Mr. McNamee, the estate manager, in 1904 and that of George F. Weston, the farm manager, in 1905 (or 1906), there was a naturalness, as well as necessity, to Mr. Beadle's taking up the role of estate manager. During the fifteen years since his arrival in 1890, he had been an important figure in both the making of the estate and its early maintenance. In the last decade of George Vanderbilt's life, when he tried to sell both Pisgah Forest and the greater acreage of the home estate (then about 18,000 acres), except for 1,000 acres around the mansion, Mr. Beadle was the single figure on site who represented continuity in the management and operations of the estate. This experience was altogether the more critical in the decade after Mr. Vanderbilt's death when the estate was held in trust for Cornelia Vanderbilt. Mr. Beadle's stewardship again served Biltmore Estate in a critical fashion in the final decades of his own life when he continued to reside on the estate and shared many responsibilities with Mr. Adams. Following Mr. Beadle's death in 1950, it was but a short time before George Cecil came home to Biltmore and took up a role in the management of the estate. It is no overstatement to say that the survival of Biltmore Estate in the Vanderbilt-Cecil family, a unique instance in the history of Gilded Age estate-making, owes beyond measure to the lifetime efforts of Mr. Beadle, who resided on the estate at Eastcote (#7) from its completion in 1900 until his death, a half-century record that exceeds the residency of any other principal in the history of Biltmore Estate.

The second person outside the family who exercised an important role in the twentieth century fortunes of the estate was Junius Greene Adams (1884-1962), an Asheville attorney, he gained the confidence of Edith Vanderbilt in the 1910s, refitted Woodcote as his residence in the mid 1930s after he became president of The Biltmore Company, and maintained a controlling influence until his death in January 1962. Mr. Adams was born in Statesville, North Carolina, on 8 February 1884; however, he grew up in Asheville where his father, Joseph Shepherd Adams (18\_\_-1911), established his law offices. In 1906 he was admitted to the bar and joined the office of Adams and Adams, with his father and brother. For most of his adult life he was called "Judge Adams," a style which derived from his service as judge of Asheville police court, from 1910 to 1914, and his work in Europe in 1918-1919 at the end of the World War as a judge advocate, legal advisor, counsel, and finally as a commissioner for the liquidation of the Third Army in Coblenz. After this last posting, Mr. Adams returned to Asheville and his law practice. As one of the original directors of the Biltmore Estate Company in 1920, he selected a choice lot on Stuyvesant Road for himself and commissioned Charles N. Parker to design his new residence. Mr. Adams occupied the English Manorial-style house, with its stone first-story supporting a half-timbered second story and attic, until ca. 1933 when, like a large number of Asheville residents, he was forced to give up the house and locate to smaller quarters. He did not live in reduced circumstances for long. Having risen in service to the Vanderbilt interests to the presidency of The Biltmore Company, he commissioned an extensive Colonial Revival-style renovation of Woodcote (#89) by Anthony Lord and moved there in late 1935 or 1936. He occupied Woodcote, which he subsequently called "Farmcote," until his death in 1962.

In addition to his role in the promotion of Biltmore Forest, Mr. Adams oversaw two critical developments in the history of the estate in the mid twentieth century: the opening of Biltmore to the public in March 1930; and the

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sustained improvement of the estate's purebred Jersey herd that gave rise to the prominence and increasing profitability of Biltmore Dairy Farms of which he was also the chief executive. Within the confines of this project, his role on the estate in the 1920s, beyond his involvement with Biltmore Forest, could not be traced; however, he likely was engaged in efforts to promote the dairy operation then, perhaps earlier, and he certainly played the leading role in the expansion of the dairy in the 1930s and 1940s. In this he continued Mr. Vanderbilt's commitment to the Jersey breed, begun with his membership in the American Jersey Cattle Club in 1891 and his building up of a dairy herd at The Homestead, New Dorp, which he relocated here in 1896.

With no little irony, Mr. Adams assumed the life of a gentleman farmer at Biltmore, a role which Mr. Vanderbilt had envisioned for himself but had little opportunity to enjoy. Ensnared in Woodcote (#89), on a hill with a handsome overview of the pastures surrounding the dairy (#78) and now lost creamery, he became a leading figure in the Jersey cattle industry and served as president of the American Jersey Cattle Club from 1943 to 1946. During his tenure, the Biltmore Jersey herd penned inside miles of white board fencing kept up from the 1930s into the 1960s, eventually numbered over 1,400 head and was the second largest in size in the United States and the world. The milking herd was maintained at about 600 cows through this period and up to the herd's dispersal in 1985. In 1942, Mr. Adams hosted the annual meeting of the American Jersey Cattle Club in Asheville and at Biltmore, presided over field days on the estate, entertained other leading Jersey dairymen at Biltmore, and traveled throughout the country to conventions and sales with the Biltmore show herd to promote the Jersey breed and Biltmore Dairy Farms.

Mr. Adams emulated George Vanderbilt in another area as well: he was an avid builder, and during his tenure he supervised a building program on the estate which was second only to that undertaken by Mr. Vanderbilt. In the 1920s, as an advisor to Mrs. Vanderbilt/Mrs. Gerry and the Cecils, and in the 1930s and 1940s as a director and president of The Biltmore Company, he was responsible for the erection of the series of large frame barns, milk houses, and tile and cement silos at each of the estate's farms (#36-38, #59, #68-69a, #106-108a, #112-114a, #122, #128-129, #131-132a). Because of his long tenure, he oversaw both the original building of the barns and their renovation and improvement as the standards for sanitation and milking methods evolved in the interwar period and afterwards. During this era, Mr. Adams also supervised the construction of a number of important auxiliary buildings for the farm operations. For these, he turned to Anthony Lord (1900-1993), a graduate of the Yale University School of Architecture who in 1929 had joined the firm established by his father William H. Lord (187\_-1993). The farm garage (#75), for which Mr. Lord prepared the plans in October 1934, was the first important building of the group to be built and remains in use today as the estate garage. In 1941 Mr. Lord drew up the plans for the sales pavilion (#58) in which calves, heifers, and young bulls bred and raised on the estate, were offered at yearly auctions. The sales pavilion stands to the east of the brick mule/calf barn (#56) in an area where an extensive complex (#55) of test, calf, and show barns was located. A coordinated and connected group of about a dozen buildings, for some of which Anthony Lord prepared original designs or alterations in the 1930s and 1940s, stood here; however, most of the complex was abandoned and later demolished ca. 1990 and only two barns (#59-60) survive.

The third group of buildings erected under Mr. Adams's direction was the series of frame cottages built for estate staff, dairy workers, and tenant farmers. Charles N. Parker, who designed Adams's Stuyvesant Road house, drew plans for the first known (#71) of this group in 1930. Mr. Parker appears to have closed his architectural office in the early 1930s, and the next residential work on the estate, the renovation of Woodcote in 1935, went to Anthony Lord. About this time Mr. Lord drew the plans and elevations of a "Workman's Cottage for Biltmore Dairy Farms" which appears to have been adapted and built in variant form in four surviving instances (#61, #63, #101, #117). The final known dairy-related cottage was a residence (#65) for the estate veterinarian, Dr. Arthur B. Christian, who came to Biltmore in January 1946; he and his family were first

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housed in a servant's apartment at The Frith until the wartime Federal Housing Administration approved the building and it was completed in 1947.

The strong growth of Biltmore Dairy Farms also occasioned a presence for the company beyond the bounds of the estate. In 1931 the company opened a distributing station in Charlotte; four years later a milk processing plant was built in Charlotte and it was enlarged twice within a half-dozen years. Biltmore Dairy opened a distributing station in Hickory, North Carolina, in 1939, and similar stations were opened in Spindale and Statesville, North Carolina, and Greenville, South Carolina, by 1950, as was a bottling plant in Winston-Salem. Erected in the opening years of the twentieth century, the main estate bottling works and creamery, where ice cream, butter, and cottage cheese were manufactured, were becoming obsolete and outdated in the 1940s, despite some improvements. The increasing herd size and demand necessitated a new production facility, and in 1943 the dairy company purchased an existing building on Coxe Avenue in Asheville for which Anthony Lord prepared renovation plans. In the event, the War Production Board did not allow the construction of the new plant during the war and it was not until the mid- 1950s that the new processing plant would be erected at the east edge of the estate, on Hendersonville Road (US 25) to the south of Biltmore Village.

The decade of the 1940s closed with changes in the Vanderbilt-Cecil family's association with Biltmore Estate. By 1932, when the estate trust was established, Cornelia Cecil was living abroad and she continued to live in France and/or England for the rest of her life, apparently never returning to the estate or Asheville. Mrs. Cecil received income from the estate as a condition of her ownership of 5,000 shares, and had the benefit of the \$5,000,000 trust established by her grandfather, William Henry Vanderbilt. From 1932 until 1939 John Cecil occupied quarters in the bachelor wing of the mansion and may have had a residence in Washington; having maintained his British citizenship, he returned to England in 1939 and served as a minister of information. Mr. Cecil returned to Biltmore House in 1946 and lived there again until his death on 22 October 1954. In the later 1940s, Cornelia Vanderbilt decided to give up her claims to the estate and agreed to sell her shares to The Biltmore Company for \$2,000,000. Payments began in 1947 and continued until 1950. In fall 1949 she married Vivian Francis Bulkeley-Johnson, a London banker (*Asheville Times*, 22 September 1949).

Biltmore House was closed to the public for a period during World War II, when it also served as a repository for paintings and sculpture removed from the National Gallery of Art in Washington for safe-keeping. Arrangements were first discussed between David Finley, director of the National Gallery, and Senator and Mrs. Gerry. In July 1941, only a few months after the museum opened, Mr. Finley, curator John Walker, and administrator Harry McBride came to the estate to meet with Mr. Adams and Mr. Beadle. They reviewed the possible storage areas and decided to place paintings in the unfinished music room on the first floor of the mansion and sculpture in the servants' dining hall in the basement. On 7 January 1942 a special railroad car carried sixty-two paintings and seventeen works of sculpture from Washington to Asheville. Described by Mr. Finley in *A Standard of Excellence* as the National Gallery's "most important paintings and sculpture," the group included both the Alba and Niccolini-Cowper Madonnas by Raphael, works by Masaccio, Pollaiuolo, Botticelli, Perugino, Titian, Van Dyck, Van Eyck, Vermeer, Rembrandt, Giotto, Giorgione, Bellini, Velasquez, Hals, and Holbein, among others, together with Gilbert Stuart's portrait of George Washington and Edward Savage's "The Washington Family." The sculpture included works by Verrocchio, Rossellino, Donatello, and Desiderio da Settignano, among others. These works of art remained in storage at Biltmore, under the watch of gallery staff, until October 1944, when they were returned to the National Galley and remounted in its galleries.

#### VI. Biltmore in Transition--The Cecil Sons at Biltmore, 1951-1978

On the morning of 5 July 1950 Mr. Adams wrote to Edith Gerry:

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Mr. Beadle's death was so unexpected that it was a shock to all of us and it will take a long time to adjust ourselves to Biltmore Estate without him. Helen and I were up at our camp on Cane River and one of the Austin boys arrived at four o'clock in the morning to tell us of his death. I spent the rest of the night until daylight trying to think things through and left there very early getting down about eight o'clock.

He went on to discuss his meeting with Mr. Cecil, and George and William Cecil, informing her "that for the time being, we would carry on without anyone holding the title of superintendent and that I would plan to spend at least an hour at the Estate office every morning to decide any problems which might come up . . ." He then went to Mr. Beadle's funeral that afternoon at All Souls Church. Louis Shelton succeeded Mr. Beadle as superintendent; the operation of the estate continued under the existing managers and supervisors with Mr. Adams at the administrative helm and young George Cecil taking an increasingly active role in the affairs of both The Biltmore Company and Biltmore Dairy Farms.

Further events in the 1950s and 1960s shaped the course of events on the estate and its evolving management. However, until his death in 1962 Mr. Adams represented continuity in its administration. So, too, did Everett D. Mitchell who served as general manager of the Biltmore Dairy Farms, directly under Mr. Adams, from 1938 into 1963. George Cecil, the eldest son, had returned to Biltmore and occupied the bachelor's wing with his father. In 1955 he married Nancy Owen, the daughter of Charles Dexter Owen Jr. They lived in the bachelor's wing of the mansion until 1956 when they moved into Eastcote (#7).

The death of John Francis Amherst Cecil on 22 October 1954 was the first of three in the space of twelve years affecting the estate. Funeral services the next day were followed by burial in Calvary Church cemetery at Fletcher (*Asheville Times*, 22 Oct. 1954). Edith Gerry had suffered a coronary attack on 9 March 1950, and she was on the course to recovery when her elder sister, Natalie Bayard (Dresser) Brown (1869-1950), the aged widow of John Nicholas Brown (1861-1900), died in Providence, Rhode Island, on 27 March. Mrs. Gerry regained much of her health, continued to reside with Senator Gerry at 62 Prospect Street, Providence, and maintained her interests in the operations of Biltmore into the mid 1950s when her health again deteriorated. Peter Goelet Gerry died without issue on 31 October 1957, leaving Mrs. Gerry as his principal heir. On 21 December 1958, Edith Stuyvesant Dresser (Vanderbilt) Gerry died at the age of eighty-five in her Prospect Street house. Her funeral was held in Grace Episcopal Church, Providence, and her body taken to Lake Delaware Cemetery, Bovina, New York, for burial (*Asheville Citizen*, 22 Dec. 1958; *Providence Evening Bulletin*, 22 Dec. 1958; *Providence Journal*, 22 Dec. 1958; *The New York Times*, 22 Dec. 1958). In her will she bequeathed paintings to her sons, the National Gallery of Art, the Rhode Island School of Design, and her portrait by Boldini, then hanging at Biltmore, to The Biltmore Company. Mrs. Gerry provided an annuity of \$5,000 per year to her younger sister Pauline Georgine Warren (Dresser) Merrill (1876-1975). She devised The Frith to her grandson William, and Buckspring Lodge to George Cecil. The residual estate was to be equally divided between her two grandsons. Her daughter Cornelia, then living at The Mount at Churchill, Oxfordshire, England, was not an heir (Buncombe County Wills, RR/107-128).

Junius Adams welcomed young George Cecil into the management of Biltmore Estate at the onset of the 1950s, and he would do the same for William Cecil, his godson, who resigned from Chase Bank in 1960, returned to Asheville and Biltmore, and occupied The Frith where he lives to the present. William Cecil served three years (1945-1948) in the British Royal Navy, graduated from Harvard in 1952, and in October 1957 married Mary Lee Ryan, the daughter of John J. Ryan, Jr., and Marian Merritt Lee. Miss Ryan was a first cousin of Jacqueline Lee Bouvier (1929-1994) who had married Senator John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917-1963) four years earlier. In 1952 Mr. Adams was honored for his commitment to Jersey cattle and the dairy industry, with an honorary Doctor of Agriculture degree from North Carolina State University. (At the same commencement the university



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honored another figure in the history of Biltmore by bestowing an honorary Doctor of Forestry degree on Carl Alwin Schenck.)

Other honors came to the estate. Biltmore Signal Bess Jane had won the Grand Champion Cow title in 1951 at the National Jersey Show. In 1952 she again won the title and Biltmore Dandy Royal was named the Grand Champion Bull. This was the first time a farm produced both champions, and, it is believed, the only time a farm produced both winners through the existence of the Biltmore herd. Having achieved the pinnacle of success, the estate withdrew from the far-flung, expensive Jersey show circuit in 1952. Having built up the farm and dairy operations on the estate, Mr. Adams' principal project in the 1950s was the construction and opening of a new milk processing plant, completed in 1957, on property at the edge of both Biltmore Forest and Biltmore Village and between Vanderbilt Road and the Hendersonville Road (US 25). Concurrently, the State Highway Commission completed plans for the Blue Ridge Parkway through the estate in 1954. The path of the parkway and extended rights-of-way on either side involved 308 acres on the estate, 77 acres of Biltmore Forest, about 238 acres on the family's Busbee Mountain lands, and about twenty acres of Mrs. Gerry's grounds at The Frith (JGA to Roy I. Wakeman, 8 July 1954). This was the first of three roadway intrusions on the landscape of Biltmore Estate, and the boundary of the parkway and the later boundary of Interstate 26 would figure as defining features in the 1979 division of the estate.

Junius Green Adams's tenure as president of The Biltmore Company came to an end only with his death of a heart attack on 4 January 1962. He had been the chief executive of the estate for nearly thirty years, a period longer than that enjoyed by its creator, George Vanderbilt, from 1888 until his death in 1914. He was buried from All Souls Church in the cemetery at Calvary Church, Fletcher. George Cecil, as the eldest son and then serving as vice-president of The Biltmore Company, became president; William Cecil served as secretary. Early in this period, on 23 May 1963, Biltmore was designated a National Historic Landmark. The two brothers effectively divided responsibilities on the estate and co-managed it until the division in 1979. George Cecil was the chief executive of the Biltmore Dairy Farms and related agricultural operations; William Cecil served as the effective superintendent of the estate and had charge of the mansion, gardens, and grounds. The principal change in the agricultural operations of the estate involved the consolidation of dairy operations, the discontinuance of milking at the individual farms, and the construction of a modern milking barn (now lost), feeding and lounge barns (#116) in the mid-1960s at Alta Vista Farm. These changes continued certain practices of economy instituted in the 1940s and early 1950s, including the replacement of the old tenant system on the individual farms by a direct employment system, giving the estate greater control of operations and profitability. Incidental buildings were also added at various farms (#70).

## VII. Biltmore Estate in the Late-Twentieth Century, 1979-2001

The interests of George Cecil and his brother William in the administration of Biltmore Estate increasingly diverged in the 1970s. By mutual agreement each man had developed particular areas of responsibility for management, operations, and programs on the estate; but their dissimilar responses to questions of where and how to make capital investments for its continued financial health and how to best utilize the large land holdings and other resources of The Biltmore Company reflected elementally different viewpoints. The resolution sought by the grandsons of George Vanderbilt became a possibility at the death of their mother on 8 February 1976. (Since her marriage to Vivian Francis Bulkeley-Johnson in 1949 in London, she had remained a resident of England; in 1972, after his death, she married William Goodsir (1926-1984), who survived her.) With her death, the trust that had been established in 1932 terminated; the two brothers inherited the estate and the assets of The Biltmore Company, and they gained legal control of both. Negotiations came to a conclusion in the summer of 1979 when, on 30 July, Biltmore Estate and the assets of The Biltmore Company were divided between the two brothers (Buncombe County Deeds: 1222/645-670). The residual estate, comprising about

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12,000 acres, was divided with the paths of Interstate 26 and the Blue Ridge Parkway accepted as the dividing lines. The Biltmore Company, now held solely by William Amherst Vanderbilt Cecil, retained title to 6,825 acres on the east side of Brevard Road/NC 191, east and northeast of Interstate 26, and north and northwest of the Blue Ridge Parkway. This acreage included the site and setting of the mansion and all of the surviving historic estate buildings except for one small early-twentieth century log cottage. The company also retained the estate office (#2) in Biltmore Village. The estate acreage on the west and southwest sides of Interstate 26 and the south side of the Blue Ridge Parkway, together with the Biltmore Dairy company and several outlying tracts in Buncombe County and the city of Asheville, were conveyed to Biltmore Dairy Farms, Inc., which became the property of George Henry Vanderbilt Cecil.

The division of their patrimony allowed each brother to pursue his respective approach and interests in the management of his inheritance. George Cecil operated Biltmore Dairy Farms and, through a provision of the division agreement, maintained the dairy herds on his brother's estate lands into the 1980s. In 1985 he sold the commercial dairy operations of the company to the Dairy Division of Pet, Inc. The Holstein and Jersey dairy herds were sold at auction, except for some 200 young animals that were retained by Mr. Cecil as the residual herd of the one that his grandfather had first established at New Dorp and moved to Biltmore in 1896. The former milk processing plant, located on US 25 between Biltmore Village and Biltmore Forest and placed in operation in 1957, was retained and portions of the building renovated and expanded as a hotel and an adjoining restaurant which continue to operate today. Since 1979 George Cecil and his holding company, Biltmore Dairy Farms, have undertaken extensive commercial and residential real estate operations on portions of the estate that he received in 1979. Through unsympathetic and irreversible changes in the appearance and character of these lands, they have lost their integrity and feeling of association with Biltmore Estate. The aforementioned Rustic-style log cottage, standing off Racket Club Road, was renovated and painted white in the late 1970s as a residence for Philippe Jourdain, the Biltmore Estate wine master who only resided there until 1979; it is now occupied by an employee of Biltmore Dairy Farms; however, there is no assurance of its preservation.

William Cecil and The Biltmore Company continued to operate Biltmore House as a highly successful historic house museum and tourist attraction. Visitation of 361,000 paying guests in 1979 increased to 900,000 in 1999. This dramatic increase occurred in part as a response to a series of innovative projects that opened and interpreted parts of the mansion to guests and others on special tours. The completion of the Music Room in 1976 and its opening allowed guests to see all of the major first-story reception rooms; today only the den off the library remains closed to view. In 1980 the kitchens, pantries, and servant work rooms in the basement were opened, providing visitors a look at the "Upstairs/Downstairs" life at Biltmore House. The third floor living hall, Mrs. Vanderbilt's bath and dressing rooms, and the sewing room were opened to guests on the regular tour in 1989, and in 1990 the Estate offered a "Behind the Scenes" tour of service rooms, work and storage areas as a for-fee extension of the regular self-guided tour. The suite of guest rooms in the tower area on the fourth story was opened in 1995, and in 1999 four principal guest rooms, named for artists, opened on the third story. That same year an Aeolian Skinner organ was installed in the Banquet Hall, giving purpose to the organ gallery detailed by the Hunt office more than a century earlier. The special tour program was revamped and expanded in 2000 with two new "Behind the Scenes" tours, a Technology Tour, and the Butler's Tour. These enable visitors to experience the service and storage areas of the mansion as well as seeing the mechanical systems originally and later installed in the house. Candlelight Christmas tours begun in 1985, proved popular, and have been extended into a near two-month run from early November through New Year's Day. In 1994, "George Washington Vanderbilt: The Man and His Treasures," inaugurated a series of special exhibitions and drew attention to Biltmore Estate's centennial. Meanwhile the first full-color guidebook, produced in 1976 during the brothers' shared stewardship, was replaced by a larger color guidebook in 1983, and in 1995 an entirely new guidebook celebrating the centennial was produced; it was revised in 2000.

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The guest service areas and sales programs have also undergone expansion. The first free-standing ticket sales office (#4), constructed in 1962, was replaced in 1995 by the current Reception/Ticket Center (#9) and admission booth (#10). Deerpark, the first restaurant on the estate, was opened in the former calf barn in 1979. In 1987 it was joined by a second restaurant, the Stable Café, in the former stable area and a companion gift shop in the former carriage house; a series of four specialty gift shops were opened in the corridor linking the two in 1992 and 1993. A third, large restaurant, The Bistro, opened in 1995 beside the Winery.

In 1971, when the first grapevines were planted on the estate in its recent times, in a test vineyard southeast of the Conservatory, the brothers initiated a project that has proven enormously successful for visitors, wine-drinkers, and the owners alike. Eight years later, in 1979, the first wine under the Biltmore Estate label was sold. Also in 1979, vines were first planted in Long Valley, on the west side of the French Broad River, where the vineyard (#133) has expanded with plantings of mostly Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon vines to cover nearly seventy-five acres today. The former dairy complex, refitted as the Winery (#78), was opened in 1985. In 2000 a total of 982,369 bottles of red, white, rose, and sparkling wines of twenty-two types were sold.

The celebration of Biltmore Estate's centennial in 1995 produced a book and a major exhibition, and two other important projects followed in its wake. The estate commissioned John J. Bryan, chairman of the art history department at the University of South Carolina, to write a history of the creation of Biltmore Estate. *Biltmore Estate: The Most Distinguished Private Place* was published by Rizzoli in 1994. It was issued to coincide with an exhibition of similar name, "The Most Distinguished Private Place: Creating the Biltmore Estate," which opened in Washington at The Octagon in October 1994 and traveled to three other venues into 1996. The exhibition, with its own paperback catalog, capitalized on the vast collection of drawings from the Hunt Office held by the American Architectural Foundation and The Octagon, the Olmsted Office at Brookline, and the drawing and photographic archives of Biltmore Estate. Increased focus on the role of the estate in the landscape history of the United States prompted a restoration of The Conservatory that was completed in 1999. That same year ground was broken for the Inn on Biltmore Estate, a 213-room hotel, which opened for business on 15 March 2001.

In 1930, when Biltmore Estate was opened to the public on a fee basis, Biltmore House effectively ceased to be a private residence, and a mansion designed for generations of house parties became a house museum. The wear on its steps and handrails, and the stains left by fond handprints, are not those of Mr. Vanderbilt, his family, and his houseguests, but rather a patina created by those who have paid to see how he might have lived. John Francis Amherst Cecil occupied rooms in the bachelors' wing until his death in 1954. George Cecil and his wife, married in 1955, also resided here until removing to Eastcote in 1956. No one has occupied the mansion in any form during the past forty-seven years. Members of the family, including William A.V. Cecil, Jr. (born 1958), president and chief executive officer of The Biltmore Company, and Diana A. Cecil Pickering, and her husband George, executive vice president of the company, reside on the estate as do employees in fourteen houses (#7, 13, 19, 39, 53, 61, 63, 65, 71, 73, 82-83, 85, 89, 109, and 117). William Amherst Vanderbilt Cecil, chairman of the board of The Biltmore Company, and his wife occupy The Frith in adjoining Biltmore Forest.

Since 1979 two real estate transactions have occurred in regard to the residual estate. On 30 December 1993 The Biltmore Company, with William A.V. Cecil as president and his wife Mary R. Cecil as secretary, conveyed the portion of the estate lying on the west side of the French Broad River and comprising 3,067 acres to their children, William A.V. Cecil Jr. and Diana Cecil Pickering (Buncombe County Deeds, 1779/310-16). On 8 September 1999 Mr. Cecil Jr., Mrs. Pickering and their spouses conveyed the property to West Range, LLC, a North Carolina Limited Liability Company (Buncombe County Deeds, 2163/847-49).

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**III. ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

When Richard Morris Hunt died on 31 July 1895, appropriately enough at his summer cottage in Newport, the loss to the architectural profession was lamented while praise was bestowed in like measure for his role in the creation and elevation of the profession in the United States. *The New York Times* (1 August 1895) described him as "One of the Foremost Architects of the United States," citing his decoration as a chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur in France in 1884 and the receipt of the Queen's Gold Medal from the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1893. Outside his family circle, the architect's death was felt acutely also at Biltmore where hundreds of workmen had labored for five years in the construction of his greatest building. Many of these men had last seen the great architect two months earlier, when he had posed for John Singer Sargent in front of his masterpiece. Here, on the day after his death, the workmen adopted a remarkably heartfelt resolution of respect and sympathy, signed by the representatives of thirteen categories of workers and conveyed to Mrs. Hunt:

*Whereas*, the great Architect of the Universe has in His wisdom removed our fellow laborer, Richard M. Hunt, from this earthly mansion to a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; and

*Whereas*, his fame as an artist and his devotion to and his accomplishments in his profession are known to the world, but his generosity, sympathy, and services in behalf of the worthy laboring men of all classes are only known to those whose good fortune it was to be under his immediate supervision;

*Therefore*, we who have worked under him, deeming it fitting that we record our love for and appreciation of him, have

*Resolved*, that in his death our country has lost its greatest architect, and our skilled workmen, artists and sculptors have lost a kind, considerate and constant friend; for neither his great fame nor his wealth ever caused him to be forgetful, indifferent, or careless of the rights and feelings of his fellowmen and laborers who were aiding in an humbler way in erecting these beautiful buildings, which, only marvellous genius could have imagined and planned;

*Resolved*, that to him more than any other man of our time all the representative workmen of this country are indebted for the elevation of their trades and arts to the position which they now hold in the ranks of the great army of skilled workmen.

*Resolved*, that we tender his afflicted family our deepest sympathy and that a copy of these Resolutions be sent to his widow.

Dated at Biltmore, N.C., August 1st, 1895.

B. Worth . . . . .	for the carpenters	J. Miller . . . . .	for the stone carvers
J. O'Neill . . . . .	bricklayers	J.C. Thompson	painters
G. Bartigate . . . .	stone cutters	L. Bowen . . . . .	electricians
S.J. McKeon . . . .	plumbers	E.D. Holt . . . . .	tile layers
R.J. Miller . . . . .	marble cutters	P.F. Jones . . . . .	coppersmiths and slaters
S.C. Gladwyn	wood carvers	P. McNiven . . . . .	stone setters
J. Mortimer . . . . .	plasterers		

COMMITTEE,

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Chairman, George Bartigate,

Secretary, S.C. Gladwyn.

The appraisal of two fellow members of the architectural profession, both published late in 1895, outlined Mr. Hunt's career and accomplishments in fuller fashion, placing his creation of Biltmore at the apex of a distinguished body of work. At the twenty-ninth annual meeting of the American Institute of Architects, in St. Louis on 16 October 1895, Henry Van Brunt offered a very personal eulogy. He had been one of three young students who first entered Mr. Hunt's studio in 1858, and he looked back with warmth on a professional association that spanned nearly forty years. Van Brunt aptly described the French Renaissance as Hunt's "native tongue."

As Richardson found in the vigorous promise of the Romanesque of Auvergne a language of art, agreeable to the robust nature of his genius, and capable of new developments in the service of modern life, Hunt discovered the prolific germs of new life in the lovely domestic Gothic of Touraine, whose progress was checked by the revival of learning in the sixteenth century in France. In the luxurious and flamboyant delicacy of this style, in its elasticity and bright exuberance, in its poetic beauty and cheerfulness, he seemed to find a medium of architectural expression, congenial to his own indomitable youthfulness of heart and not inconsistent with the dignity and order of his cherished ideals.

Among his latest works the superb house of the Goelets and the interior of the beautiful pavilions of Belcourt at Newport, and, above all, the chateau of Biltmore in North Carolina, bear witness not only to his profound respect for authority and to his command of precedent, but to a certain pliability of mind, which enabled him to accommodate all the complicated conditions of modern living within the reasonable compass of the Gothic of Chambord or of Pierrefonds (*Proceedings*, 82).

Montgomery Schulyer composed a more comprehensive overview of Hunt's architectural career, "The Works of the Late Richard M. Hunt," published in the October-December 1895 number of the *Architectural Record*. His contemporary assessment was one that might be offered today, crediting Mr. Hunt with a pivotal role in transforming the townhouse of New York bankers, financiers, and merchant princes from a "bourgeois mansion" to a "palace" and the "expansion of the Newport cottage of 1855 into the Newport palace of 1895." He also cited Biltmore as the fruition of a dream first imagined in the design of the William K. Vanderbilt mansion at 660 Fifth Avenue. The following extended quote from Mr. Schulyer's essay is the most expert contemporary appraisal of Hunt's great accomplishment at Biltmore House, and one that has stood the test of time:

It has been Mr. Hunt's great good fortune to have for once, in Biltmore House, an opportunity to design a true chateau, with the surroundings and accessories of nature and of art proper to a chateau, having not only the elaboration and the costliness, but also the magnitude, and above all the detachment, which the scheme requires. This was a chance to create a true "seat" to enhance the refinements of his architecture by its contrast with the noble and primeval landscape which it commands, and to invoke the most skilful co-operation in the landscape-architecture which mediates between the two. . . . The reader cannot fail to note how great an advantage has come from the absence of limitations, not alone in cost, for Biltmore House shows no more regardlessness of expense than the palaces of Newport, but in any respect whatever upon the freedom of the designer. No pent-up "villa site" here contracted his powers. As much as he might need of "the whole boundless continent" was at his disposal. Nobody can fail to note the advantage of this freedom in the royal scale of the chateau which he has set upon the plateau converted into a terrace, nor how the architect has used his advantage. The dependencies of the main building here take their places as dependencies, for there is ample room to let them come as they will and not as they must, and this amplitude is of the utmost value, as enabling the architect to give the sense of freedom, of

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variety in unity, and of frank expressiveness that forms the charm of the masterpieces of the style he has chosen. Neither can it be overlooked how effective is the contrast between the richness and refinement of the entrance-front, a richness and refinement enhanced by the formal garden which forms the approach, and the comparatively rude vigor and spirit of the opposite front which opens directly upon the wide prospect of the wilderness. Upon this side the sloping revetment that faces the terrace and extends far beyond the house, not only furnishes an effective base for the mansion which stands at its centre, but becomes itself an important member of the architectural composition. Its value is very greatly enhanced by its ingenious masonry, which not only contrasts effectively with the smooth ashlar above, but gives to the basement a texture which is visible and valuable as far as the building can be seen. The front as a whole, and including the stables at one end as well as the terrace wall at the others, is an excellent example of a general balance in composition, and of its advantage, certainly in a country-seat with wild natural surroundings, over a more strict and formal symmetry. The centre, distinctly marked and bounded by its two towers, is emphasized by the expanse of wall of the wing on one side and the low cluster of the stables beyond, and on the other by the emphatic blots of shadow of the loggia and by the terminating terrace-wall. In the other front, as its general scheme made fit, there is a somewhat closer approach to formal symmetry. The masses on each side of the central tower with the attached open staircase, of which the motive, and only the motive, is borrowed from Blois, are equivalent, but they are not equal, and much less identical, and it is to the inequality in their equivalence that the front owes the life and movement it obtains without sacrifice of clearness or of dignity. The roofs are here as successful as the walls they crown and cover, and unit instead of scattering the masses beneath, while there are in their treatment very positive felicities, as in the steep hood of the three-sided bay at the end of what may be called the forest front. I wish that it had been possible to illustrate more fully the detail by which the effect of these dispositions is so much heightened. But the general views suffice to prove that if the architect had an opportunity in its kind unequalled on this side of the ocean--and indeed upon the other, since the old chateaux of like extent with Biltmore House were composed piecemeal and in different generations, and not at a single stroke--he has taken advantage of it to produce a result also in its kind unequalled.

The judgments of Montgomery Schuyler and Henry Van Brunt and the resolution of sympathy conveyed by the workmen at Biltmore to Mrs. Hunt pay tribute to an extraordinary man, his genius, and his creation of this indisputable landmark among many important buildings, from his hand and his office, that distinguish later-nineteenth century American architecture. The details of Mr. Hunt's life and his career have since been ably recounted by Paul R. Baker in *Richard Morris Hunt* (1980) and in *The Architecture of Richard Morris Hunt* (1986), the catalogue for the exhibition of the same name, edited by Susan R. Stein. Educated at the École des Beaux Arts, widely traveled as a youth and an architectural student, and coming from a long-respected New England family, Hunt was well-positioned when he returned to the United States in 1855 and opened a studio in New York early in 1856. A year later he joined Richard Upjohn, a friend from the family's brief residency in New Haven, and ten other architects in the organization of The American Institute of Architects on 23 February 1857. For the next thirty-eight years, Hunt's patronage came from the upper-class world of New York and New England in which Hunt and his family moved. His earliest surviving building in the United States, the John N.A. Griswold summer house, was completed in 1863 in Newport, Rhode Island, where a number of Hunt's most important buildings were erected up to his death in 1895. Proportionally, more of these resort cottages survive than do the institutional, commercial, and office buildings in New York City, and the series of houses, swelling from imposing town houses to Fifth Avenue mansions, in that city.

Whether considered in the context of Mr. Hunt's forty-year career as a leading American architect or for its role in the Country Place movement at the turn of the century, Biltmore--the mansion and the estate--is a remarkable achievement, one acknowledged in the opening pages of the two modern books, both published in 1990, on the

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American country house. Clive Aslet, the editor of *Country Life*, devoted his first chapter to the house, "The Country House as Stately Home," in *The American Country House*. He concluded by quoting Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.'s appraisal of Biltmore in 1895 as "the beginning of an era of great American Country places and country houses" (Aslet, 17). In *The Architect and The American Country House*, Mark Alan Hewitt likewise opens his work with an assessment in the chapter, "Rich Men and Their Houses:"

Biltmore remains unequalled in size and grandeur, a monument to an age of excess. It is America's greatest country house, as defined by the English: the aristocratic seat of a gentleman landowner, from which he administers his estate lands. Yet it differs profoundly from any English examples. Both wealth and political power are vested in the country houses of the British Isles, but this is not so in America, even at Biltmore. Vanderbilt's estate yielded income from its dairy, agricultural and forestry enterprises, but the house was far more a symbol of culture and taste than a source of capital. . . . Biltmore was the most compelling example of the grand, semipublic country house designed to celebrate the achievements of the capitalist oligarchy of which its builder was a leading figure. Its conspicuous symbolism was of leisure and wealth not of political dominance (Hewitt, 1-2).

Aslet and Hewitt are both correct in their analysis of the house and its position in American architectural history; however, the focus on the mansion belies the larger and more complex significance of Biltmore Estate. Indeed, George Washington Vanderbilt was a rich man by the standards of both the 1890s and today; however, his wealth bore little comparison with that of his brothers and other men, including John D. Rockefeller, who would build landmark American houses in the opening decades of the twentieth century. Through his remarkable friendships with both Richard Morris Hunt and Frederick Law Olmsted, with whom he had worked on projects beginning in the mid-1880s, Mr. Vanderbilt magnified his lesser fortune (of about \$15 million) to create an estate that was unrivaled in any real sense until 1919 when William Randolph Hearst (1863-1951) and his architect Julia Morgan (1872-1957) began the collaboration that became San Simeon; Mr. Hunt was the first American to study at the École des Beaux-Arts, Miss Morgan was to be the first woman to study there, and each utilized that training in these related but vastly different buildings. The genius of both places lies in work that was brilliant at its conception and whose quality was sustained over extended periods of building.

During the years (1888-1895) he worked on Biltmore, Richard Morris Hunt was also engaged on other great houses in Newport: The Marble House for William K. and Alva Vanderbilt, Ochre Court for Ogden Goelet, Belcourt for Oliver H.P. Belmont, The Breakers (NHL) for Cornelius Vanderbilt II; and in New York City, either on or near Fifth Avenue, on mansions for Elbridge T. Gerry, Mrs. William Astor and John Jacob Astor IV, William V. Lawrence, Elliott Fitch Shepherd, and Henry Hoyt, all of which are lost. Hunt's ability to carry this work through was possible only through a large, well-trained office that included his son Richard Howland Hunt (1862-1931), Warrington Gillette Lawrence, Maurice Fornachon, Richard Sharp Smith, and others. The young Hunt joined his father's firm and worked in association with him on Biltmore. Mr. Smith was the on-site supervisor of construction for the Hunt office from 1890 to 1896. Fornachon dealt with the project in the New York office, and also came to Biltmore during construction for inspections. Warrington G. Lawrence and others produced many of the detail drawings for the house and its finish. Mr. Lawrence made his own European tour in late summer 1889, on the heels of Mr. Hunt and George Vanderbilt, and visited Blois, Versailles, Fontainebleau, and other town and country mansions. On 15 September 1889, he reported to Mr. Hunt: "We have had a fine time and have seen many beautiful things, made some sketches and taken many notes which I hope will be very useful to us in our work by and by." And so they were. This talented combination of architects and draftsmen worked at Richard Morris Hunt's direction up to his death on 31 July 1895, and afterward under the supervision of Richard Howland Hunt until the mansion was essentially completed in 1896.

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If Biltmore House stood virtually alone in its landscape, as does The Breakers, Whitehall, and other important Gilded Age mansions, its significance would be indisputable. However, Biltmore House was designed as the seat of a great landed estate, and the creation of Biltmore Estate figures equally in the architectural significance of this property as the preeminent surviving example of the American Country Place movement.

The path to this distinction was not entirely direct but had its genesis in another intention. In eighteenth and early nineteenth-century America, wealthy plantation owners had often built town residences in which they spent winters and enjoyed congenial society while their children were educated in the better schools of urban centers such as Charleston, South Carolina, and New Orleans. In mid-century, town dwellers turned increasingly to the shore and mountains for respite from the summer heat, whether to small regional resorts such as Flat Rock, North Carolina, or to Newport, Rhode Island. As the nineteenth century wore on, the concept of second houses and seasonal cottages, as well as annual trips to Europe, became an established part of social life among the wealthiest Americans. Although the affluent of Boston had been turning to the warmer climate of Italy to escape the rigors of New England winters, retreat to the warmer sections of the American South did not really become fashionable, or in fact possible, until the later decades of the nineteenth century when railroad lines penetrated sections of the Georgia and Florida coast and the interior regions of Georgia and the Carolinas. Jekyll Island and Augusta, Georgia, Aiken, Camden, and later Charleston, South Carolina, St. Augustine, Palm Beach, and Miami, Florida, all became the location of preferred winter colonies in the years leading up to the turn of the century and thereafter. The idea of Asheville as a winter resort in the 1880s and 1890s appears foreign now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, when the appeal of western North Carolina and Virginia at this season largely owes to a developing ski industry. However, to those seeking escape from the harsh, bitter winters of New York, the relatively milder climate of Asheville was no doubt attractive. It was sufficiently appealing to George Vanderbilt and his mother that they came to Asheville and found accommodations at the Battery Park Hotel in the winter of 1887-1888.

In parallel courses a house intended as a winter retreat evolved into the largest private residence in the United States and the grounds of this retreat swelled, by purchase after purchase, into one of the largest private estates in the nation and the epitome of both the Gilded Age and the American Country Place movement. Once the acreage had enlarged beyond that necessary for pleasure and privacy, the die was cast. Mr. Olmsted realized as much when he paid his visit to the property in the late summer/early autumn of 1888 and laid out the blueprint for a gentleman's country estate in a memorandum to his patron on 12 July 1889. Mr. Olmsted had every reason to believe Vanderbilt would embrace his ideas. In 1887 he had begun improvements to the family farm at New Dorp, commissioning new stables, a barn, dairy, and a gardener's cottage from Richard Morris Hunt; these buildings were complete in 1889 when Mr. Vanderbilt is believed to have begun purchasing the Jersey dairy cattle that he would move to Biltmore in 1896.

Another family building project was no doubt equally influential on the development of Biltmore. In 1885/1886 his sister Eliza and her husband, Dr. William Seward Webb, beginning to enjoy her inheritance, had begun purchasing land on the shore of Lake Champlain at Shelburne, Vermont, and eventually acquired some 3,800 acres for their Shelburne Farms (NHL). They engaged Frederick Law Olmsted in 1886 to design the property, providing acreage for domestic purposes and pleasure, gardens, and agricultural lands. That same year they commissioned a series of farm buildings from Robert Henderson Robertson (1849-1919), a prominent if now little known New York architect. Over the course of some twenty years the Webbs erected thirty-three buildings to designs provided by Robertson, the most important of which were the farm barn (1890), the breeding barn (1891), the coach barn (1902), and Shelburne House, begun in 1887 and enlarged and overbuilt to 1900.

At Biltmore, George Vanderbilt initiated farming and estate operations even before construction began on the house and soon built a number of agricultural buildings, only two of which, the sheep barn and shepherd's



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cottage (#97-98), survive. Dating from 1891-1892, they are wood frame with shingle-clad elevations. Those buildings, designed by agricultural consultant Edward Burnett, predate the Conservatory and gardener's stable where Richard Morris Hunt and Richard Sharp Smith utilized masonry construction with pebble-dashed, brick-trimmed elevations and red tile roofs in an English Manorial style that became an architectural vocabulary for the estate. Thereafter, the buildings designed by Richard Morris Hunt, Richard Howland Hunt, and Richard Sharp Smith, including the estate office, entrance lodge, the horse barn and stables, the main dairy and barns, the truck farm and truck farmer's cottage, the incubator house at the poultry yards, the line houses, All Souls Church, and the buildings of Biltmore Village, held to this model and preserved a strong architectural unity throughout the estate.

With the completion of the dairy barn complex and the horse barn and stables, both in 1902, George Vanderbilt had essentially built up the fabric of the home estate. While some construction continued in Biltmore Village into 1903, virtually no buildings of consequence were erected following his losses in the collapse of the United States Shipbuilding Company. Except for some occasional projects, including the Busbee Road gatehouse, the estate remained as built in 1902/1903 until the 1930s when a major building program for the dairy farm was instituted by Junius Adams. These buildings, including white gambrel-roof dairy barns, milk houses, concrete silos, and some half dozen residences built on a similar model, have their own consistency of finish and scale. Like the Vanderbilt-era buildings from the turn of the century, whose insistent manorial presence bespeaks their history and intention, the new interwar-period dairy buildings, some of which are architect-designed and others built from stock plans, reflect their time, place, and purpose. In retrospect, the difference in appearance and materials is welcome and preserves the visual and architectural clarity between the two important building programs that produced the historic architectural fabric of Biltmore Estate between 1888 and 1950.

### LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE SIGNIFICANCE

In mid-1888 when George Washington Vanderbilt approached Frederick Law Olmsted in regard to the tract of some 2,000 acres he had acquired for his winter estate, Mr. Olmsted was sixty-six years of age and the foremost landscape architect in the United States. Although the status of landscape architecture as a profession was not officially secured until the organization of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 1899, the role of professional men and women in the creation of designed landscapes had greatly increased in the years following the Civil War. There is no overstatement in drawing the obvious parallels between the career of Frederick Law Olmsted and the development of landscape architecture as a profession in the second half of the nineteenth century; they were virtually one and the same. The design and building of Central Park, in 1858-61 in collaboration with Calvert Vaux (1824-1895), was the cornerstone of Olmsted's practice, and it represented the critical public acknowledgement of the necessity of employing men who combined expertise in engineering, design, horticulture, and related fields in the creation of public works. Writing to his stepson John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920) from the Brick Farm House (see #151) on 27 October 1890, Olmsted made another important analogy:

To you & Harry (Henry Sargent Codman, 1864-1893), this work will, twenty years hence, be what Central Park has been to me. The first great private work of our profession in the country. I have gained some points of value, this visit. I should like to confine myself to it for the rest of my days, and I feel today that I am a good deal nearer seventy than I ever was before.

Olmsted's prescient remarks were unknowingly accurate on a personal level as well. In the final five years of his career, his work at Biltmore Estate would engage more of his interest and energies than any other project. From 1889 into mid-1895, Olmsted made on average two to four trips to Biltmore each year, staying first in public accommodations, then the Brick Farm House, and lastly at River Cliff Cottage (see #42). These stays

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varied in duration from a period of four to five days to over a month, depending on the work under way, the weather, the press of other business, and finally Olmsted's declining health.

The effects of advancing age and mental decline increasingly circumscribed his activities until the late fall of 1895 when his professional association with the family firm was ended. On 16 November 1895, Olmsted, his wife, their daughter Marion, and their youngest son Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. sailed for England on a health cure that was extended into early July 1896. Travel did not prove a panacea, and long periods were spent in private sanatoria. On his return Olmsted entered confinement at a family residence at Deer Isle, Maine, but as his mental decline continued on its inexorable course, this effort also failed. Frederick Law Olmsted was committed to McLean Hospital at Waverly, Massachusetts in September 1898. He died there on 28 August 1903. Whether his visage is recorded in private family photographs made in England or Maine is unconfirmed; John Singer Sargent's portrait of him, painted in spring 1895 on the Approach Road (#11), was the last public image made in his lifetime.

Beginning in 1894, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. was resident in Asheville and serving an informal apprenticeship under Mr. Beadle; in November 1895 he became a member of the family firm, then practicing as Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot, and the Biltmore work was put in his charge. The majority of the firm's design work at Biltmore was completed by 1895; Mr. Olmsted Jr. continued to supervise planting and installations. The firm, reorganized as Olmsted Brothers after Charles Eliot's death in 1897, prepared plans for the horse stables (#81) and dairy office in 1900; the drawings for the glen in 1900 and 1901 represented the last important work on the estate.

From the outset, Mr. Olmsted was fully cognizant of both the extraordinary challenge and the opportunity that Biltmore represented, and one of the earliest appraisals of its importance appears in a letter of 6 November 1889 to W.A. Thompson, who was engaged as superintendent of the engineering department on the estate:

This is to be a private work of very rare public interest in many ways. Of much greater public interest--utility, industrial, political, educational and otherwise, very possibly, than we can define to ourselves. I feel a good deal of ardor about it, and it is increased by the obviously exacting yet frank, trustful, confiding and cordially friendly disposition toward all of us which Mr. Vanderbilt manifests.

In the event all that Mr. Olmsted opined proved true. Vastly expanded by Mr. Vanderbilt's purchase of Pisgah Forest, Biltmore came to be the largest private estate in the United States and the most recognized symbol of America's Gilded Age. Olmsted, however, perceived its larger, deeper significance and the value of his role in developing its potential. He went about its creation in a highly organized professional manner that proved invaluable during its construction and essential to its survival.

Exactly when Frederick Law Olmsted first visited the property that became Biltmore is yet to be confirmed; however, the earliest known surviving letter concerning the estate, dated 29 October 1888 and written to J.G. Aster (sic), suggests a very recent trip, possibly as early as September but more likely during the month of October. J.G. Astor, a local surveyor who Olmsted met on this trip, probably in the company of Mr. Vanderbilt and Mr. McNamee, was hired to prepare a preliminary survey of the new purchases and report on the conditions and special properties of the acreage. Unfortunately, neither Astor's survey of the property nor any written report are known to survive, but they appear to have been promptly produced, and were in Olmsted's hands when he apparently returned to Asheville in the winter of 1888-1889. Although the specific siting and orientation of the mansion continued to be refined through the year, Olmsted was sufficiently grounded in his undertaking of the property that he was able to offer suggestions and advice to Richard Morris Hunt in his letter

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of 2 March 1889 that proved critical to the final appearance of the house, its positioning in the landscape, and the resolution of the immediate house grounds.

Olmsted's own writings, together with a wealth of supporting documentation in the Biltmore Estate Archives, the Olmsted Archives at Brookline, and the Olmsted Collection at the Library of Congress, indicate the remarkable extent to which every step in the creation of Biltmore Estate owes to Olmsted's genius and perseverance. While the general topography of the estate and its natural features, including the French Broad and Swannanoa rivers, are givens, the character and appearance of the estate and its 6,825 residual acres derive from Olmsted's prescription for its development. Photographs of estate lands and those subsequently taken of the mansion and its dependencies under construction show the barrenness of the landscape that so disappointed Olmsted on his first visit in 1888; however, he appreciated the "distant outlook" that had appealed to Mr. Vanderbilt and understood the potential of the property. After arranging for the survey of the lands, he next arranged for nurseryman/forester Robert Douglas to examine the property in June 1889. In his short report, Douglas concluded that the soil, while depleted by shallow plowing, was better than feared and could be restored by deep plowing and manure; he also advocated planting white pines (*Pinus strobus*) on the hillsides and uplands. Relatively fast growing, white pines would both improve the scenery and provide eventual profit. Douglas's report confirmed the possibility of what Olmsted saw as a necessity for the property; the majority of Vanderbilt's acreage would be devoted to forestry.

In July 1889 Frederick Law Olmsted drafted a report to Mr. Vanderbilt that became the blueprint for the estate and its architectural, agricultural, and landscape development. Transmitted to Mr. Vanderbilt under cover of 12 July, it comprised nine sections and outlined the framework of the estate that survives essentially intact to the present although its acreage has both increased and decreased. In part one he addressed the location of the mansion, the views from the house and terrace (which Olmsted had simulated by the construction of scaffolds), and the location of the present Conservatory and Walled Garden (#26a-26b) to the south and east of the "court" that subsequently was enlarged on his recommendation and known as the Esplanade. The matter of water supply to the estate was briefly noted in part two with the report that W. A. Thompson, who had succeeded Mr. Aston, was following up on Olmsted's recommendations.

Olmsted strategically devoted the bulk of the report, comprising part three, to "The Forest." Taking into account Mr. Douglas's report, Olmsted carefully crafted his text to educate Mr. Vanderbilt on the woeful condition of much of his poorly-farmed acreage, to excite his interest on the potential it held by comparison with less abused native woodlands "at no great distance from the Estate," and to gain his endorsement for the implementation of a forest plan that "would not only make the best use of the property for the direct satisfaction of yourself and friends but would be doing the country an estimable service and thus from the start give the Estate a rank like that which Blair Athol has among the great British estates." In the single paragraph of section four, "The Question of a Name," Olmsted advised the use of a name that "should fall trippingly from the tongue," cautioned Mr. Vanderbilt on the use of an Indian name, and casually offered "Broadwood" as a possibility.

Having been a farmer on Staten Island, in proximity to the Vanderbilt property, Olmsted had certain reservations and introduced his advice on agriculture, section five, stating "You know that what passes with us as 'gentleman farming' is generally a very costly (sic), and that after a time, it usually comes to be a very unsatisfactory amusement." Olmsted wrote "it will be best to confine tillage to the river bottoms and a few fields near them and, as a rule, sell no farm product except live stock and this mostly fat and fine." He further advised Mr. Vanderbilt, "I think that you will find it best to have two centres of operations, one for the upper, one for the lower bottoms, with silos and feeding stations at each. (The meadows before the residence, I do not think you will want to cultivate after once putting them in order. They may be made a part of the park, or kept permanently for hay and pasturage.)"

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In section six, "The Park," Olmsted advised Mr. Vanderbilt, "The best place in which to keep deer or other animals where they may be seen to advantage . . . will be on the west side of the residence where it can be looked into from its windows and terrace." He described it as differing "from the forest in having a much larger portion of unwooded ground; in having a larger proportion of its trees standing singly and in groups; in being more free from underwood; and in having a turf surface, forming a fine pasture and giving a pleasant footing for riding or walking freely in all directions." On the practical side he cautioned, "A park that would answer every desirable purpose would not, I think, exceed two hundred and fifty acres."

Olmsted outlined his initial thoughts on "The Arboretum" in section seven and described its course through the acreage to the south of the house where he proposed a dam on Four Mile Creek to create a lake at its start.

Such a road as I have thus indicated would make convenient sub-divisions of the forest and in connection with the streams which it would follow would be a guard against the spread of fires. It would be a very picturesque road, and on its borders there would be situations of great variety in respect to soil and exposure and generally of the highest fertility to be found on the Estate. My idea, in a word, is to form the Arboretum by cutting back and thinning out the present standing wood on the borders of this road, leaving the best trees and bushes but making place for the planting of the collection, choosing for each representative tree a position adapted to develop its highest character and exhibit it, in several specimens, to the best advantage. . . .

Without doubt an arboretum could be formed in this way by far finer and more instructive than (any) other in the world, an arboretum to which naturalists would resort from all parts of the world.

It would, of course, be backed at all points by the main forest of the Estate and the trees would group with those of the forest.

In section eight Olmsted detailed his proposal for "The Approach."

I suggest that the most striking and pleasing impression of the Estate will be obtained if an approach can be made that shall have throughout a natural and comparatively wild and secluded character; its borders rich with varied forms of vegetation, with incidents growing out of the vicinity of springs and streams and pools, steep banks and rocks, all consistent with the sensation of passing through the remote depths of a natural forest. Such scenery to be maintained with no distant outlook and no open spaces spreading from the road; with nothing showing obvious art, until the visitor passes with an abrupt transition into the enclosure of the trim, level, open, airy, spacious, thoroughly artificial Court, and the Residence, with its orderly dependencies, breaks suddenly and fully upon him. Then, after passing through the building, the grandeur of the mountains, the beauty of the valley, the openness and tranquility of the park would be most effectively and even surprisingly presented, from the windows, balconies and terrace.

Olmsted concluded his report in section nine advising Mr. Vanderbilt to develop a nursery where the many thousands of plants to be used on the estate could be propagated and grown out. "Propagating and rearing them on a scale large enough to warrant the employment of a good gardener with a suitable plant for the purpose would cost you not (a) quarter as much as the commercial price." Olmsted then noted a number of trees and shrubs to be raised at Biltmore.

In the matter of naming the estate, and after a false start with the uninspired "Bilton," George Vanderbilt settled on Biltmore, a name that met Olmsted's qualification of "suitable significance" and one that had not otherwise been "appropriated." As the Biltmore Estate was developed during the subsequent six years, all of these

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recommendations were put into effect except for the arboretum; the estate was marked by the clarity, consistency, and comprehensive vision apparent in Olmsted's proposal. The construction of the two viewing scaffolds was a brilliant stroke, and once on their platforms, Mr. Vanderbilt was convinced of the siting of the house and the advantage of the terrace, now known as the South Terrace, in providing a place for promenade and larger views over his domain. Likewise, the forecourt, long since known as the Esplanade, was enlarged and deepened to serve as a reflecting ground for the mansion's handsome facade, a simple act respecting the scale of the house and its setting that heightens one's pleasure on first viewing Biltmore House.

In retrospect, Olmsted's recommendations on forestry were surely the most important of any he made to Mr. Vanderbilt, and they reflected a passion that was at once professional and personal. "Years ago I rode alone for a full month through the North Carolina forests, and it was with great regret that at last I emerged from them. There is no experience of my life to which I could return with more satisfaction." A year and a half later, on 20 January 1891, Olmsted wrote to his old friend Frederick John Kingsbury "We have planted on the 'old fields' 300 acres of white pine and are preparing schedules of stock for the forest planting and are instructing and breaking in two foremen with small gangs for taking out the poor and dilapidated trees of the existing woods." These plantings, portions of which survive (#137b-d), marked the first instance of large scale private forestry in America and reflected Vanderbilt's commitment to forestry that brought Gifford Pinchot and Carl Alwin Schenck to work on the estate and provided the laboratory for the Biltmore School of Forestry.

Mr. Olmsted's recommendation to reserve the bottom lands for agriculture was based in large part on their obvious fertility and ease of tillage. They and their adjoining, gently sloping hillsides continue to be used for cultivation or pasture. Whether Mr. Vanderbilt had decided in summer 1889 to relocate his Jersey herd from New Dorp to Biltmore is unclear, but Olmsted anticipated such a possibility when writing of "making the Estate famous as a head-quarters for particular breeds and strains." In the event the Jersey herd nurtured successively by Baron d'Aligne, George Weston, and Mr. Adams became one of the best known features of the estate and its one singularly successful long-term agricultural enterprise before the winery. The poultry operation, recalled today in the incubator house (#84), was an example of "Gentleman farming" that became, as Olmsted warned, "a very unsatisfactory amusement" and was abandoned within a decade. (Except for the matter of objectionable odors, the demise of the swinery remains unresolved.) The only significant variation from Olmsted's agricultural advice was the early, successful adoption of truck farming and the erection of the truck farm (#93), the now-lost glasshouses, and the adjoining cottage (#94).

The deer park was developed as Olmsted recommended, virtually to the letter. It survives intact today as an important landscape feature enjoyed from the windows, balconies, and terrace of the mansion while guests driving along River Road appreciate the stately "trees standing singly and in groups."

Although the general approach to the mansion site from the Biltmore railroad station and Asheville was somewhat preordained, Olmsted quickly realized the advantage it represented as a means of introducing visitors to the estate and made it the first of a series of landscape experiences. The construction and planting of the Approach Road occupied him throughout his association with Biltmore, and on 26 July 1895, after leaving the estate for the last time, he wrote a long (seven-page letter) to Mr. Beadle encouraging his attention to plantings on the borders of the road:

There is nothing that we are now so anxious about at Biltmore as that these borders should more fully acquire the general aspect originally intended and which we have been accustomed to suggest by saying that it is one more nearly of sub-tropical luxuriance than it seems to me is now fully promised, or than has, as yet, been as fully provided for as it is possible that it may be. The subject is one of so much interest to me that I may be pressing instructions upon you further than I should. . . .

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What in going over the Lower Approach Road I have mainly felt is that on its immediate borders there is not now as much promise of luxuriance and profusion of vegetation as there may be, and that there is yet a great deal too much that is raw, barren and rude, comparatively with the standard that we should have before us. There is too little that is permanent, that we might not find at the North. We are not gaining enough from our little advantage of climate. That is to say, people will not realize, in coming from the North, that they are gaining as much advantage of climate as it is desirable that they should, and we ought to provide, with all the art that we can use, for the appearance of much more difference of climate that there actually is.

In the event, the Approach Road became the "masterpiece" which Olmsted wrote it could be (FLO to JCO, 5 Mar. 1892). Although the rich subtropical luxuriance in its vegetation has been lost over the years, largely because of the expense of its maintenance, and the road cries for its return in some measure at least, all of the other identifying elements survive. The architectural structure of the road, the stone bridges, pools, and changing course of Ram Branch, the sense of enclosure, closeness, and near-mystery, the feeling of ascent and of movement toward something important, remain. The Approach Road continues to delight guests as Olmsted intended, despite the lesser intrusion of Interstate 40, elevated on stone piers, and the greater intrusion of parking lots, with insufficient separation, as it nears the Esplanade.

The nursery that Olmsted proposed for the estate was built on his advice on the north side of the Swannanoa River and in 1890 Chauncey Beadle was sent by the Olmsted office to have charge of its operations. For a quarter-century it supplied plants to the estate and for part of that time, in the twentieth century, it became a valuable commercial enterprise and supplied plants through catalogue sales. Its facilities became the site of the estate herbarium and a botanical library, and the nursery would have remained a viable part of the estate except for the great damages it suffered during the Flood of 1916. Its site, near the Asheville edge of the estate, was one of the properties that was sold after Mr. Vanderbilt's death.

Olmsted's sustained work at Biltmore is surely the most important of that undertaken for some dozen "considerable private estates" executed after 1875 when he took his nephew and stepson John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920) into his office. Except for Biltmore, this estate work has received relatively little attention and much less than his and the firm's public works, campus plans, residential parks, work at the United States Capitol, and the design of the grounds of the World's Columbian Exposition. Two estate projects, both dating from the 1880s, invite comparison. At Moraine Farm, the 275-acre estate of John C. Phillips at Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, Olmsted located the house on a terrace overlooking Wenham Lake, defined portions of the acreage for gardens and park, agriculture, and forest, and devised a curving approach road calculated to raise expectation for the Tudor-Revival-style mansion that stood at its end. Olmsted's work at Shelburne Farms, a 3,800-acre country estate at Shelburne, Vermont, is closer in spirit to Biltmore and its near contemporary. Beginning ca. 1886 George Vanderbilt's sister Eliza and her husband Dr. William Seward Webb began acquiring the first of thirty-two contiguous tracts that they soon engaged Frederick Law Olmsted to organize as a summer residence with extensive facilities for cattle operations and a Hackney breeding stable and farm. In 1889, the same year he produced the plan for Biltmore, Olmsted crafted a plan for Shelburne Farms, also defining parts of the estate for park, farm, and forest. While the organization of the residual 1,300-acre estate retains those general divisions and the association with Olmsted, his employment by the Webbs lasted only three years. Olmsted's plan, which merged and reshaped existing fields and farms and erased old fence lines and roads and replaced them with new ones--work he also prescribed for Biltmore, was largely implemented by the farm manager Arthur Taylor from the late 1880s to 1905. Neither of these projects, however, or the other important estates which Olmsted designed, approached the vast baronial scale of Biltmore, nor did they involve the extraordinary reclamation, rejuvenation, and reforestation of thousands of acres that formed George Vanderbilt's estate.

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Frederick Law Olmsted gained national acclaim and wide respect in his lifetime, and his reputation has diminished in no degree during the century since his death in 1903. His life, his work, and that of his firm has been the subject of countless books and articles, both scholarly and popular, of which the most important remains Laura Wood Roper's *FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted*, published in 1973. In the mid-1940s she met Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., gained his friendship, and ultimately gained his cooperation on her research into his father's life. She enjoyed and made the greatest advantage of an opportunity that no other writer in the twentieth century possessed. She did not judge Olmsted's work, giving one project advantage or pride of place over another, but instead quoted Olmsted himself, a man who remained remarkably objective on his career as a landscape architect that spanned nearly four decades. She could not really improve upon the assessment of his work that Olmsted made in a letter to an old friend, Mrs. William Dwight Whitney, written from the Brick Farm House at Biltmore on 16 December 1890:

I need not conceal from you that the result of what I have done is to be of much more consequence than anyone else but myself supposes. As I travel I see traces of influences spreading from it that no one else would detect--which, if given any attention by others, would be attributed to "fashion." There are, scattered through the country, seventeen large public parks, many more smaller ones, many more public or semi-public works, upon which, with sympathetic partners or pupils, I have been engaged. After we have left them they have in the majority of cases been more or less barbarously treated, yet as they stand, with perhaps a single exception, they are a hundred years ahead of any spontaneous public demand, or of the demand of any notable cultivated part of the people. And they are having an educative effect perfectly manifest to me--a manifest civilizing effect. I see much indirect and unconscious following of them. . . . Then I know that I shall have helped to educate in a good American school a capital body of young men for my profession, all men of liberal education and cultivated minds. I know that in the minds of a large body of men of influence I have raised my calling from the rank of a trade, even of a handicraft, to that of a liberal profession--an Art, an Art of Design. . . .

Laura Wood Roper's *FLO* was published eighty years after Olmsted's first biographer, Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer, wrote "Frederick Law Olmsted" for *The Century Magazine* (May 1893). Mrs. Van Rensselaer (1851-1934), a long-time friend of Olmsted's and the biographer of their mutual friend Henry Hobson Richardson (*Henry Hobson Richardson and His Works, 1888*) is also, arguably, America's first architectural and landscape historian. She, too, let Olmsted speak for himself:

The most interesting general fact of my life seems to me to be that it was not as a gardener, a florist, a botanist, or one in any way specially interested in plants and flowers, or specially susceptible to their beauty, that I was drawn to my work. The root of all my work has been an early respect for and enjoyment of scenery, and extraordinary opportunities for cultivating susceptibility to its power. I mean not so much grand or sensational scenery as scenery of a more domestic order--scenery which is to be looked upon contemplatively and is productive of musing moods.

This, of course, was the essential qualification that made Olmsted so well matched to the Biltmore project where he was required to create the structural fabric of a vast estate on a canvas of lands that had been ill-used for generations. A lifetime of careful, critical, and appreciative observation had prepared him for the work enabling him to see all the potentialities of place and guiding his every decision. While the Italian Garden, the Ramble, the Walled Garden and its Conservatory, the Glen, and other pleasantries constituting the mansion's house grounds were necessary, constituent features that gave immediate pleasure to Mr. Vanderbilt and his guests, Olmsted looked over the garden wall and beyond the terrace to the production of scenery across the breadth of the acreage. From his travels in North Carolina in the antebellum period, recounted in 1860 in *A Journey in the Back Country*, Olmsted knew the earlier appearance of the place that had captivated Mr.

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Vanderbilt. At Biltmore he crafted a landscape that drew on his memory, travels elsewhere in the United States, England, and the Continent, and the summary work of a long career. And it was here, to Biltmore, that Olmsted, cognizant of his failing health, sent his son and namesake in 1894 to live, to study under Mr. Beadle, and to grasp every opportunity as he and the firm went about their role in creating “the most distinguished private place, not only of America, but of the world, forming at this period” (*FLO* to partners, 1 Nov. 1893). Again, Olmsted’s own words, written as the preface to an account of Eaton Park published in his *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England* in 1852, poignantly describe his achievement at Biltmore and a large part of its meaning in the history of American landscape architecture:

What artist so noble, has often been my thought, as he who, with far-reaching conception of beauty and with designing power, sketches the outline, writes the colors, and directs the shadows of a picture so great that Nature shall be employed upon it for generations before the work he has arranged for her shall realize his intentions.



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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register.
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other (Specify Repository): Biltmore Estate Archives,  
Biltmore House  
Asheville, NC

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Acreage of Property: 6,949.48

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description:

See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification:

See continuation sheet.

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**10. Geographical Data**

UTM References

	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>
1.	17	354894	3935245
2.	17	355806	3936658
3.	17	358269	3936994
4.	17	360094	3936915
5.	17	360532	3934819
6.	17	359826	3931038
7.	17	358577	3929328
8.	17	358041	3929053
9.	17	355631	3931442
10.	17	354680	3933182

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary of the designated Biltmore Estate NHL property is shown in yellow on the map of the estate entitled: *Aerial Map Showing the Boundaries and Complete Holdings of the Biltmore Estate (Biltmore Company) National Historic Landmark.* (prepared by The Biltmore Company and included with this report). The Estate Office Building at One Biltmore Plaza (resource #2) is discontinuous from the main estate holdings and occupies a small (0.193 acre) parcel two blocks east of the estate's main entrance (ref. Buncombe County Deeds: Ward 7, Sheet 2, Lot 55) and is also shown on the aforementioned map.

Boundary Justification: The boundary of Biltmore Estate includes the cohesive intact collection of historic buildings, structures, sites, agricultural, domestic, and horticultural outbuildings, gardens, woodlands, fields, forest plantations, and water courses that were erected and created during the period of significance, 1888-1950, and which, through their condition, integrity, and setting, retain their association with that era. The justification for the boundary and the boundary reduction appears in the Integrity Statement (see pages 88 to 97).

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### Schedule of Photographs

1. Name of property: Biltmore Estate (photographs A through V) and Biltmore Farms, Inc., Property (photographs W through FF).
2. Location: Buncombe County, North Carolina.
3. Name of photographer: All photographs were made by Biltmore Estate staff except for photographs Z, BB, CC, EE, and FF that were produced by Davyd Foard Hood. Photograph GG was copied by Biltmore Estate.
4. Date of photographs: Photographs A through V were produced in winter 2001. Photographs W through Y, AA, DD, and GG were produced in summer 2003. Photographs Z, BB, CC, EE, and FF were shot on 15 May 2003.
5. Location of original negatives: Negatives for photographs produced by Biltmore Estate are in the Biltmore Estate Archives, Asheville, NC. Negatives for photographs by Davyd Foard Hood are in the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

### Photographs

- A. Biltmore House (#22), east façade, looking west.
- B. Biltmore House (#22), Library.
- C. Biltmore House (#22), Banquet Hall.
- D. Estate Office (#2), looking northwest.
- E. Entrance Lodge (#5), looking west onto east façade.
- F. View on Approach Road (#11), looking north.
- G. Rampe Douce (#23), looking east to Vista Pergola (#24).
- H. View, looking northwest, from Glen Road across the Walled Garden (#26a) to Biltmore House (#22).
- I. Walled Garden (#26a), looking southeast, with Conservatory (#26b) and the Gardener's Cottage (#26c).
- J. Brick Bridge (#6d) at the Bass Pond (#32), looking east.
- K. Biltmore House (#22), west façade, looking east from the Lagoon (#96).
- L. Sleepy Hollow Barn (#68) and Silos (#69), looking north.
- M. Landscape view along River Road with stone bridge (#6kk), looking northwest.
- N. Horse Barn and Stable (#81), looking northwest.

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- O. Incubator House (#84), looking northeast.
- P. (former) Dairy Barn and Buildings, now Winery (#78), looking west/northwest.
- Q. Inn on Biltmore Estate (#88), looking south.
- R. Truck Farm Building (#93), looking east, with Truck Gardener's Cottage (#94).
- S. Brick Bridge (#6j) on Service Road, looking east/northeast.
- T. Vineyard and Lake (#133) in Long Valley, looking north.
- U. Sheep Barn (#97) with attached silo and milk house, looking north/northwest.
- V. Alta Vista Barn and milk house (#112) and Silos (#114-114a), looking west.
- W. 1920s log cottage on Biltmore Farms, Inc., property, looking north.
- X. Woodland on the north side of Ducker Mountain, looking south on a former logging road now used as a trail by the Biltmore Estate Equestrian Center.
- Y. Woodland in the north part of the Arrowhead Peninsula, looking northwest in area logged in late 1997.
- Z. View of Carolina Power and Light Company (now Progress Energy) transmission line and cleared right of way, looking east. Photograph by Davyd Foard Hood.
- AA. Woodland view in lower part of the Arrowhead Peninsula, looking east.
- BB. Landscape view with Interstate 26, looking southwest. Photograph by Davyd Foard Hood.
- CC. Schenck Parkway, looking southeast. Photograph by Davyd Foard Hood.
- DD. Woodland view in former Rice Place Forest Plantation, looking southeast.
- EE. View in Biltmore Park, looking south/southeast on Viburnum Lane. Photograph by Davyd Foard Hood.
- FF. House under construction on N. Braeside Court, looking east. Photograph by Davyd Foard Hood.
- GG. Figure 1 from *Forest Plantations at Biltmore, N.C.*, written by Ferdinand W. Haasis and issued as Miscellaneous Publication No. 61 by the United States Department of Agriculture (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office (1929), 1930).

Slides

- 1. Biltmore House (#22), east façade, looking west.
- 2. Biltmore House (#22), Library.
- 3. Biltmore House (#22), Banquet Hall.

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4. Estate Office (#2), looking northwest.
5. Entrance Lodge (#5), looking west onto east façade.
6. View on Approach Road (#11), looking north.
7. Rampe Douce (#23), looking east to Vista Pergola (#24).
8. View, looking northwest, from Glen Road across the Walled Garden (#26a) to Biltmore House (#22).
9. Walled Garden (#26a), looking southeast, with Conservatory (#26b) and the Gardener's Cottage (#26c).
10. Brick Bridge (#6d) at the Bass Pond (#32), looking east.
11. Biltmore House (#22), west façade, looking east from the Lagoon (#96).
12. Sleepy Hollow Barn (#68) and Silos (#69), looking north.
13. Landscape view along River Road with stone bridge (#6kk), looking northwest.
14. Horse Barn and Stable (#81), looking northwest.
15. Incubator House (#84), looking northeast.
16. (former) Dairy Barn and Buildings, now Winery (#78), looking west/northwest.
17. Inn on Biltmore Estate (#88), looking north.
18. Truck Farm Building (#93), looking east, with Truck Gardener's Cottage (#94).
19. Brick Bridge (#6j) on Service Road, looking east/northeast.
20. Vineyard and Lake (#133) in Long Valley, looking north.
21. Sheep Barn (#97) with attached silo and milk house, looking north/northwest.
22. Alta Vista Barn and milk house (#112) and Silos (#114-114a), looking west.
23. 1920s log cottage on Biltmore Farms, Inc., property, looking north.
24. Woodland on the north side of Ducker Mountain, looking south on a former logging road now used as a trail by the Biltmore Estate Equestrian Center.
25. Woodland in the north part of the Arrowhead Peninsula, looking northwest in area logged in late 1997.
26. View of Carolina Power and Light Company (now Progress Energy) transmission line and cleared right of way, looking east. Photograph by Davyd Foard Hood.
27. Woodland view in lower part of the Arrowhead Peninsula, looking east.
28. Landscape view with Interstate 26, looking southwest. Photograph by Davyd Foard Hood.



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29. Schenck Parkway, looking southeast. Photograph by Davyd Foard Hood.
30. Woodland view in former Rice Place Forest Plantation, looking southeast.
31. View in Biltmore Park, looking south/southeast on Viburnum Lane. Photograph by Davyd Foard Hood.
32. House under construction on N. Braeside Court, looking east. Photograph by Davyd Foard Hood.

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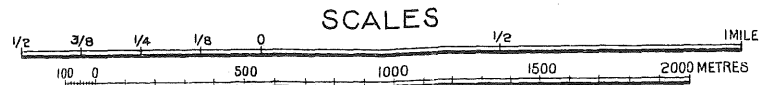
Date: September 2003

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DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK  
May 23, 1963  
(ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVED APRIL 5, 2005)

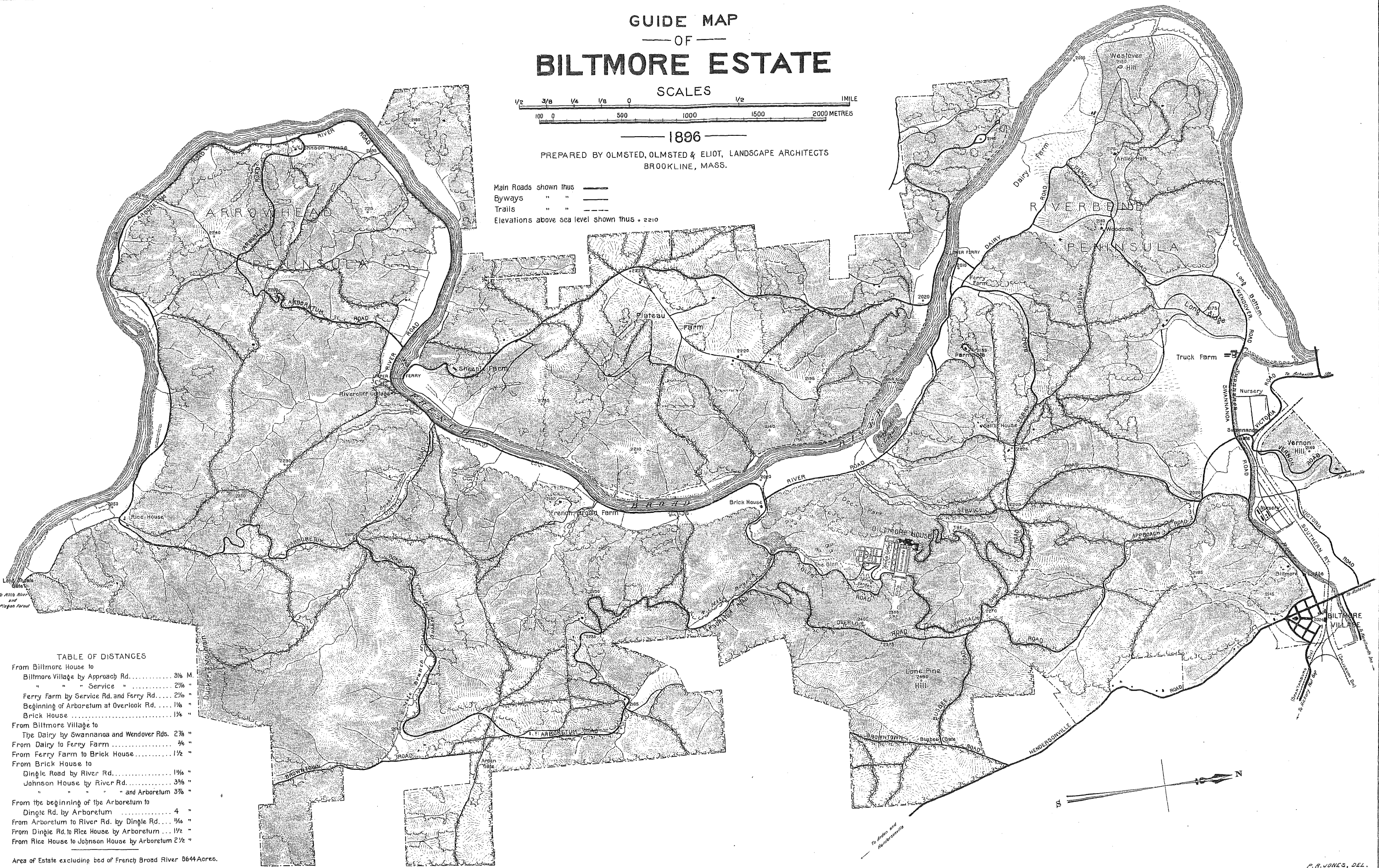
# GUIDE MAP — OF — BILTMORE ESTATE



1896

PREPARED BY OLMSTED, OLMSTED & ELIOT, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
BROOKLINE, MASS.

Main Roads shown thus ———  
Byways " " ———  
Trails " " - - - -  
Elevations above sea level shown thus • 2210



### TABLE OF DISTANCES

From Biltmore House to	
Biltmore Village by Approach Rd. ....	3 1/2 M.
" " " Service " .....	2 1/2 "
Ferry Farm by Service Rd. and Ferry Rd. ....	2 1/2 "
Beginning of Arboretum at Overlook Rd. ....	1 1/2 "
Brick House .....	1 1/4 "
From Biltmore Village to	
The Dairy by Swannanoa and Wendover Rds. ....	2 3/4 "
From Dairy to Ferry Farm .....	3/4 "
From Ferry Farm to Brick House .....	1 1/2 "
From Brick House to	
Dingle Road by River Rd. ....	1 1/4 "
Johnson House by River Rd. ....	3 3/4 "
" " " and Arboretum .....	3 3/4 "
From the beginning of the Arboretum to	
Dingle Rd. by Arboretum .....	4 "
From Arboretum to River Rd. by Dingle Rd. ....	1 1/4 "
From Dingle Rd. to Rice House by Arboretum .....	1 1/2 "
From Rice House to Johnson House by Arboretum .....	2 1/2 "

Area of Estate excluding bed of French Broad River 8644 Acres.