

# LSU Burden Center

## Cultural Landscape Report



suzanne turner associates - 2010

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# ONE: Introduction

## *Project Background*

The Burden Center is a 440-acre green space in the heart of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the state's capital and largest city. Initially an agricultural holding located well beyond the nineteenth century city, today it is a university research station and a museum of rural life conveniently situated astride Interstate 10, and is surrounded by dense commercial development. The land was for many years the home place of the Burden family, where they raised cattle and made a modest living. In the early decades of the twentieth century, the three siblings of Pike, Sr., and Ollie Burden inherited the land, and each left their mark, but none as deeply as did Steele Burden. The youngest of the three, Steele, a self-taught landscape designer, established the Rural Life Museum, an open-air collection of Louisiana vernacular architecture and folk life. He also designed and planted Windrush Gardens, twenty-five acres of formal and informal ornamental gardens adjacent to the original family house that dates to the antebellum period. Steele Burden was also responsible for the plantings that line the internal circulation routes that organize the large complex, and was probably the designer of much of the site's layout as well.

The original Burden home now exists alongside the Rural Life Museum, Windrush Gardens, and the house and landscaped gardens that older brother Pike Burden, Jr., built for himself and his wife Jeannette in the 1940s. In the 1970s, Steele and his sister Ione generously donated the entire land holding to Louisiana State University, for use as a horticultural research and extension station, and for related educational and conservation activities. For many years after the donation, Steele Burden was still actively involved with activities at Burden Center on a daily basis, and provided important continuity and communication between the various entities that had administrative jurisdiction over the property. The LSU Agricultural Center is in charge of the research and extension portion of the property, as well as Windrush Gardens; while the Chancellor of LSU A&M maintains management control of the Rural Life Museum. Mr. and Mrs. John C. Monroe, Pike's nephew, live in the Pike Burden House, which is basically an "inholding," surrounded by LSU property on three sides with the remaining side fronting Ward's Creek.

After Steele Burden's death in 1995, the need for coordination between these two arms of LSU became obvious. Because each has a different agenda, a separate budget, different operational methods, and different "cultures," the various entities at Burden had gone along on their separate paths without optimizing collaborative opportunities. Meanwhile the Rural Life Museum had developed its own master plan and built a new visitors' center and parking lot, which involved a land swap with the Agricultural Center, as well as a donation of a land parcel from the Monroes. With this major addition to the landscape realized, it became clear that a more formalized planning effort was the logical next step to ensure that the resources of Burden Center were maximized through the coordination of planning and programming between the two governing entities. The current master planning effort, including this Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), is a result of the initiative taken by the Agricultural Center to develop a comprehensive plan for the entire property. This plan is intended to maximize the site's potential to offer educational and recreational resources for the community of Baton Rouge, while at the same time protecting those parts of Burden that have special value in maintaining the integrity and sense of continuity of the site and that have combined to create its reputation as a landscape of great quality and value in the heart of the city. This CLR is the primary tool for this "protection" part of the planning process.

#### *Purpose of the Cultural Landscape Report in the Master Planning Process*

Master planning for a cultural landscape<sup>1</sup> is a dynamic process, implying a circular and unpredictable series of steps rather than a linear one. In an ideal world, the earliest step in the development of a plan for a landscape of historic and cultural significance is the production of the CLR to set a direction for the master planning effort. The CLR traces the historic development of the landscape, identifies the elements that are significant and should be protected and that perhaps should be featured in the development of a new master plan,

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<sup>1</sup> The National Park Service (NPS) defines *cultural landscape* as a "geographic area associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values." The four types are historic sites, historic designed landscapes (Windrush Gardens), historic vernacular landscapes (Burden agricultural landscape), and ethnographic landscapes (landscapes containing resources that associated people define as heritage resources, such as religious sacred sites).

pinpoints the sections of the landscape that have lost their original integrity and are in need of design intervention, and, most importantly, articulates what the essential qualities of the landscape as a cultural resource, are. Therefore, the report contains critical information about the site that lays the groundwork for the decision-making that is to follow. In the case of the Burden Center Master Plan, there was so much momentum to initiate the planning process, that there was not sufficient time to complete the Cultural Landscape Report prior to the larger plan. So the two plans were undertaken simultaneously, with the use of a preliminary CLR to inform planning decisions.

The time-frame to undertake a CLR varies depending upon the scale and complexity of the site, and the availability of research materials, particularly historic information, related to the landscape. Burden posed the typical challenge—the historic information had not been collected prior to the project’s start-date, and time was required to collect the available materials from various sources. Beyond gathering the historical data, the researchers must process and interpret it—and often time-consuming endeavor, because the information has not been carefully kept in one place, nor catalogued, nor understood as valued documentation for a study of landscape evolution. More importantly, producing a clear historical narrative from incomplete and uneven documentation requires that researchers thoughtfully evaluate and analyze the data in order to discover the connections between the events in the site’s development, and also the relationships to the larger historical forces at play.

The purpose of this extensive process is two-fold:

1. To ensure that a site’s history gets recorded before it is too late, i.e., while documentation survives and people who care about the future of the landscape are alive; and to produce a report that will provide the information for future generations. The history of a landscape as large and complex as Burden will never be completed in a study period as short as this, but this will form the basis for future study—history is always being updated and re-written, as new information is discovered or facts are reinterpreted.
2. To serve as the rationale for planning and design decision-making (described as “treatment”<sup>2</sup> in NPS terminology). One of the most important values of the recommendations of the CLR is that it documents the rationale for decision-

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<sup>2</sup> The NPS defines *treatment* as “work carried out to achieve a particular historic preservation goal.”

making, so that in fifteen or so years, when a new group of policy-makers begins to question why things are the way they are, there is a document that supports the treatment decisions made in the intervening years, rather than having to reinvent the wheel once again. This does not imply that plans will not have to be up-dated—they will. But the next generation will have solid information, and an intellectual framework based upon group consensus to use as a starting point.

### *The Opportunity*

At no time in the past century has there been such a surge of interest in the kind of horticulture and small-scale agriculture that would have been common-place in the nineteenth century rural South as there is now. Steele Burden's realization that the rural landscape as he knew it was fast disappearing proved to be well-founded. It is widely accepted that the way of life of this culture of early settlement was based on principles utilizing the wise use of resources and that these principles align with the tenets of today's "new" sustainability movement.

Burden's vision for the Rural Life Museum has provided a unique opportunity for Louisiana urbanites and visitors from other locales to experience the richness of the vernacular architectural traditions of Louisiana. The contexts in which the buildings are displayed are compressed in scale and limited in scope, because demonstrating the broader rural landscape is not the primary mission or goal of the museum. But with the current master planning initiative of the Agricultural Center, there exists the opportunity to not only demonstrate ornamental horticulture appropriate to contemporary suburban life (a Center for Urban Horticulture), but also to provide a landscape backdrop exhibiting the scale and complexity that would have been experienced in the typical landscape of the nineteenth century rural South, where the production of fruit and vegetables for the table was a major necessity and pre-occupation of the settler. With the current emphasis on healthy food systems, small family farms, local foods, and low-resource consumption, the opportunity to use the Ag Center's fruit and vegetable research experiment plots as a public education tool—in addition to their testing purposes—presents the possibility that a visitor could not only experience a range of the architectural vocabulary of the state's common rural landscape, but also the landscape of production.

The historic record does not tell us whether Steele Burden consciously intended for this juxtaposition of the agricultural landscape, with its hedgerows, field patterns, and dramatic seasonal changes, to serve as a prelude for the visit to the architectural displays of Rural Life, or whether it was just a synchronistic marriage of research plots and a tourist destination. But the development of the current master plan presents the opportunity to capitalize upon these relationships in ways that are mutually beneficial to the Rural Life Museum, the LSU Agricultural Center, and the Baton Rouge community.

Through tracing the history of this property, Suzanne Turner Associates will demonstrate how the landscape of the Burden Center is poised to more fully demonstrate the Burdens' wishes for their legacy—to preserve nature and history for the educational and recreational enhancement of the community.

## **TWO: Methodology**

The basic steps in the process of developing a CLR are outlined below. Although they are presented in chronological order, the process is dynamic, and research typically occurs while site reconnaissance is also underway.

### **Research**

#### *Primary Documents*

##### *Manuscripts*

The Ione Burden Family Papers (Burden Papers), housed in the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection (LLMVC), Louisiana State University Libraries, include correspondence, financial papers, legal documents, printed items, ephemera, scrapbooks, sketches, books and photographs related to the Burden family from 1900 to 1975. Suzanne Turner Associates (STA) did a preliminary review of the collection; we have relied on Faye Phillips' recently published *The LSU Rural Life Museum and Windrush Gardens, A Living History*, for detailed historical information from the collection. Phillips surveyed the papers extensively in writing her book on the property.

STA was given access to other primary documents or copies of them that were either in the possession of Mr. John Monroe or the Rural Life Museum. One of the most significant of these was the hand-written "Wishes of Ione and Steele Burden's in regard to the Burden Research Property" (January, 1973), which we have transcribed. The original is still in the possession of the Monroes, the transcription is included in as Appendix Three to this report.

##### *Historic Photographs*

Photographs are often the most illuminating documents for historic landscapes, particularly when they are dated, or when their date can be estimated based upon the photograph's content. The Burden property has been extensively photographed during its evolution, both conventionally, and from the air, thanks to Pike Burden, Jr.'s early penchant for flying and for aerial photography. STA surveyed photograph collections from John Monroe, as well as notebooks from the collection of the Rural Life Museum, and other photographs selected from Rural Life files provided by David Floyd. Typical of most

families, there were many photos of people, but not very many photographs of the overall landscape of the Burden property. There was more coverage of the small ornamental gardens associated with the first cottage built by Pike Burden, Jr., and of the area immediately surrounding the original Burden House, than there were of Windrush Gardens and its garden rooms, as created by Steele Burden. What would have been particularly useful would have been photos of Windrush Gardens featuring the garden's spaces, taken during the early years of its existence (1920s to 1950s). Hopefully photos matching this description will surface in the future.

#### *Historic Oblique Aerial Photographs*

A very unusual resource available to the researchers was the existence of aerial photographs taken by Pike Burden, Jr., sometime in the 1940s. These images, mostly taken at oblique angles from his personal airplane, are from a much lower elevation than the USDA images – therefore they exhibit a much higher resolution. We know that these photographs were taken sometime after 1942 because Pike's newly constructed home, designed by Richard Koch of New Orleans, has already been built and is visible in many of the aerial images.

#### *Oral Histories*

Three oral history interviews of Steele Burden, including transcriptions, are available at the T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History at LSU, and were reviewed for this project:

- 1978 interview of Steele Burden by Robert Ray Cox;
- 1993 interview of Steele Burden by Suzanne Turner;
- 1994 interview of Steele Burden by Kathy Grigsby.

#### *Videotape*

A videotape of Steele Burden by David Floyd in 1994 was provided by the Rural Life Museum for viewing as background for the CLR, and provided important information about Burden's intentions for the future of the property.

### *16mm film*

A collection of 16mm film owned by John and Frances Monroe has been digitized by Kadair Photography and shows the Burden family feeding Peacocks, sitting at various places in the garden, and exploring Steele's summer house/studio, which must have been new at the time.

### *Aerial Photographs*

The LSU Map Library serves as a repository for both USGS maps and the aerial photographs produced by the USDA for the state of Louisiana. The library's collection of USDA images covers 1931, 1941, 1953, 1959, 1967, 1973, 1978, 1989, and 2009. The last image examined in this series is not a USDA image and was provided by The Portico Group as supporting information for the new master plan.

### *Secondary Documents*

*“The LSU Rural Life Museum and Windrush gardens, a living history,” by Faye Phillips (2010)*

The publication of this history of the museum and Windrush Gardens was particularly timely for the completion of this report. Because Phillips has combed through the Burden Papers at LSU, her book contains some details that we had not come across in our previous research. Her book also allowed us to verify and in some cases correct information included in our timeline for the Burden Center's development (Appendix 1).

*Tracy Stakely's thesis, “Steele Burden and Windrush: A Historical Documentation of a Landscape Designer and his Garden” (1997)*

This master's thesis in landscape architecture is a valuable resource not only for its interviews and its documentation of Steele Burden's landscape design work, but particularly because of the physical inventory done by Stakely of the plantings of Windrush Gardens. Stakely created a series of drawings in AutoCAD format that serve as a baseline measurement for the gardens shortly after the 1995 death of their primary creator and

caretaker—Steele Burden. Throughout the summer of 2009, STA resurveyed these areas using the Stakely drawings as a base plan, primarily noting items that are now missing some twelve years later, and noting additions or what might have been omissions from the original plans. The timing of this survey, done in conjunction with this CLR, is critically important considering the natural disaster that occurred in 2008 – Hurricane Gustav, which also resulted in some major losses in Windrush.

The comparison of these two surveys, Stakely's and STA's, is contained in this report; the two surveys provided the basic data for evaluating the integrity of Windrush Gardens and for the development of recommendations for restoring the gardens.

*Newspaper articles from the collection of John and Frances Monroe, and the Suzanne Turner Associates' vertical files*

Because the development of the Burden property has been so intertwined with the history of Louisiana State University, and also with the development of cultural institutions in the Baton Rouge community, events related to its evolution have been frequently recorded in the local press. These articles were useful in filling in some of the gaps in the more recent history of the property, as well as clarifying some of the key players in specific events occurring at Burden.

*“Burden Research” by Warren A. Meadows*

Dr. Meadows served as resident director of the Burden Research Center from 1979 to 2000; after his retirement he wrote a twenty-one-page memo/memoir describing the highlights of his tenure at the Burden Center. The unpublished typescript is an important narrative covering some of the inside stories of the place and how some of the decisions were made during his tenure. It provides insight on the personalities of Steele Burden; Dr. Rouse Caffey, Chancellor Emeritus of the LSU Agricultural Center; and others involved in shaping the Burden landscape.

### *Other short reports and publications*

Other sources that provided data for the report or that corroborated information are the following; HABS documentation on LSU Rural Life Museum and Windrush Gardens by the LSU Office of Community Preservation (1995), various issues of the Burden Horticulture Society's newsletter *Reflections and Visions*, "The Burdens of Windrush Plantation," by John Carlton Monroe II, and "Genesis of Windrush Plantation: A Short History of Section 41, Township 7 South, Range 1 East, Greensburg Land District," by Ory Poret and Stella Williamson.

## **Contexts**

In order to have a frame of reference against which to compare the story of the Burden property's development, it is necessary to have an understanding of how the landscape related to other properties of its type. This contextual placement deepens the understanding of any place, and provides the credibility for making judgments about a landscape's significance. Because there are no other places quite like Burden in Louisiana, nor in the region, it is challenging to define what the appropriate contexts for comparison are.

For the purposes of this report, the Burden Center will be reviewed in terms of its geographical and natural setting, its relationship to the cultural and historical patterns of settlement in the Baton Rouge locale, its origins within the political backdrop and planning of land grant university campuses, and as an example of "southern antebellum revival landscape design,"<sup>3</sup> particularly Windrush Gardens. This contextual analysis will help answer questions such as:

- Are the initial antebellum and postbellum farm landscapes typical of those in the region?
- How the university research facility is an example of a national movement at state A&M land grant universities of the period.
- How the layout of the entire complex and the design of its circulation, water features, and formal gardens relate to those being designed in the region and nation during the period during which they were produced.

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<sup>3</sup> This term is not in common usage. It is used by Turner to refer to landscape design in the South that revives the form, style, and spirit of antebellum gardens, in a way that parallels how colonial revival gardens mimicked the gardens of the American colonial period.

The examination of the Burden Center through these various lenses will provide a more sympathetic comprehension of the various forces that coalesced to create the landscape of Burden as it exists today.

### **Construction of Timeline and Historical Narrative**

Using the various historical documents, a timeline is created to organize the key events in the evolution of the Burden property. This timeline serves as the “skeleton” or outline for the development of a narrative history of the landscape. This narrative forms the basis of the “Statement of Significance,” as well as providing material for the eventual development of interpretive and promotional materials and programs.

### **Site Reconnaissance**

#### ***Existing conditions***

##### ***Character-defining Features<sup>4</sup>***

The National Park Service has prescribed methodologies for creating a CLR, and these are summarized in a series of papers entitled *Landscape Lines*, produced by the Cultural Resources section of the Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes.

*Landscape Lines 3* addresses “Landscape Characteristics,” and prescribes that the site be analyzed in terms of the following elements: natural systems, features, and topography; spatial organization; land use; cultural traditions; cluster arrangements; circulation, auto and pedestrian; vegetation; buildings and structures; views and vistas; constructed water features; small scale features; and archaeological sites (6-11).

#### ***Existing Conditions Plan***

In addition to the analysis of character-defining features, an “Existing Conditions Plan” has been produced to indicate the most important issues related to the cultural and

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<sup>4</sup> The NPS defines *character defining feature* as “a prominent or distinctive aspect, quality, or characteristic of a cultural landscape that contributes significantly to its physical character. Land use patterns, vegetation, furnishings, decorative details, and materials may be such features.”

historic features of the landscape. This plan records and analyzes the existing conditions of the natural and cultural landscape; identifies the patterns that can be determined; and indicates the various layers in the landscape and which patterns belong to which layer. These historic layers are then coordinated with images in historic aerial photographs and historic photos, and are keyed to the timeline.

#### *2009 AutoCAD Plant Survey of Windrush Garden*

As mentioned above, the 2009 update of Stakely's 1997 survey of the plants of Windrush Garden provides a fine-grain report of the specific plant materials that were in the gardens at the time that STA conducted its fieldwork. Because Windrush is the most highly developed ornamental landscape at Burden, and arguably Steele Burden's finest example of landscape design, it has been given more intensive recordation in the CLR than other portions of the landscape.

### **Analysis and Evaluation**

By comparing the site's history and its existing conditions to similar landscapes of the period, the **significance** of the Burden landscape can be assessed. Those features and characteristics which contribute to establishing the significance are then articulated. The **integrity**<sup>5</sup> of these elements is evaluated to determine whether enough of the site's historic and cultural fabric survives intact and in a legible form to warrant its preservation and management as a significant landscape. To summarize the evaluation phase, a **statement of significance**<sup>6</sup> is produced that articulates the compelling reasons that the landscape has been judged as important and worthy of some type of preservation treatment. Based upon the inventory and analysis, the statement of significance explains why the landscape is important as an exemplar of the history and culture of the area; whether local, regional, and national or some combination of these scales. Typically this determination is based upon the use of the

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<sup>5</sup> The NPS defines *integrity* as "the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evinced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's historic or prehistoric period."

<sup>6</sup> The NPS defines *significance* as "the meaning or value ascribed to a cultural landscape based on the National Register criteria for evaluation. It normally stems from a combination of association and integrity."

standards developed by the Secretary of the Interior for the selection of properties for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The statement of significance should serve as a starting point for the development of the master plan—it essentially describes the over-riding character of a landscape, and implies that any planning decision that might work against that character would be a move in the wrong direction. Once the CLR determines that a landscape is significant, and which parts of the landscape actually make it significant, then these determinations guide decisions made during the planning process.

## Treatment

Treatment refers to the preservation strategy that is recommended for long-term management of a cultural landscape based upon its significance, integrity, and the programmatic needs and resources of the client. The National Park Service has described four primary treatment alternatives for historic landscapes. These are summarized in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*:

Preservation requires “retention of the greatest amount of historic fabric, including historic form, features, and details as they have evolved over time.”

Rehabilitation “acknowledges the need to alter or add to a cultural landscape to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the landscape’s historic character.”

Restoration allows for “the depiction of a landscape at a particular time in its history by preserving materials from the period of significance and removing materials from other periods.”

Reconstruction establishes a framework for “recreating a vanished or non-surviving landscape with new materials, primarily for interpretive purposes” (National Park Service, *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, 1993).

## **THREE: Summary of Research Findings**

### **Documentation**

The results of the written documents and oral histories have been used to construct the narrative history of the Burden property which occurs later in this report. The “Wishes of Ione and Steele Burden” manuscript informed the narrative, but was particularly useful in developing an overall approach to the management philosophy for the future of Burden, and for shaping the specific recommendations for treatment.

### **Photography**

In surveying the photographic record of Burden, the analysis will begin with the broadest view, looking at the property in its larger context as photographed in the USDA aerial record, and will then zoom in closer to the property itself through the aerial photos of Pike Burden, Jr. Finally, the ground level historic photos taken from family photo albums and other collections will be used to survey the individual features of the Burden landscape and to examine how it has changed over time.

## Analysis of USDA Historic Aerial Photographs



Figure 1: 1931 USDA Image, Burden Property

### 1931

The first USDA image available for the area encompassing Burden dates from 1931. The most striking thing about this image is the fact that the entire Burden property is surrounded by forested land. In every direction there is a buffer of trees which surrounds the property. Only at the entrance on Burden Lane does this almost continuous canopy of trees appear to fragment and open up in order to create the setting for the Burden Home. To the back of the house are patterns of agricultural fields laid out in rectilinear grids with radiating farm roads bisecting the property in different directions. In the far southeast corner of the property there is a pattern that appears to be a grove or orchard of trees (noted on drawing),

but this pattern is not legible in the 1941 aerial and by 1953, this feature has disappeared and matches the rest of the agricultural acreage, with no grove-like pattern discernable.



**Figure 2: 1941 USDA Image, Burden Property**

### **1941**

The 1941 aerial is very limited. We do not know why this frame covers only a small portion of the property, but the comparison to the same area from 1931 shows little change, with almost identical agricultural outlines, and a few visible outbuildings or structures.

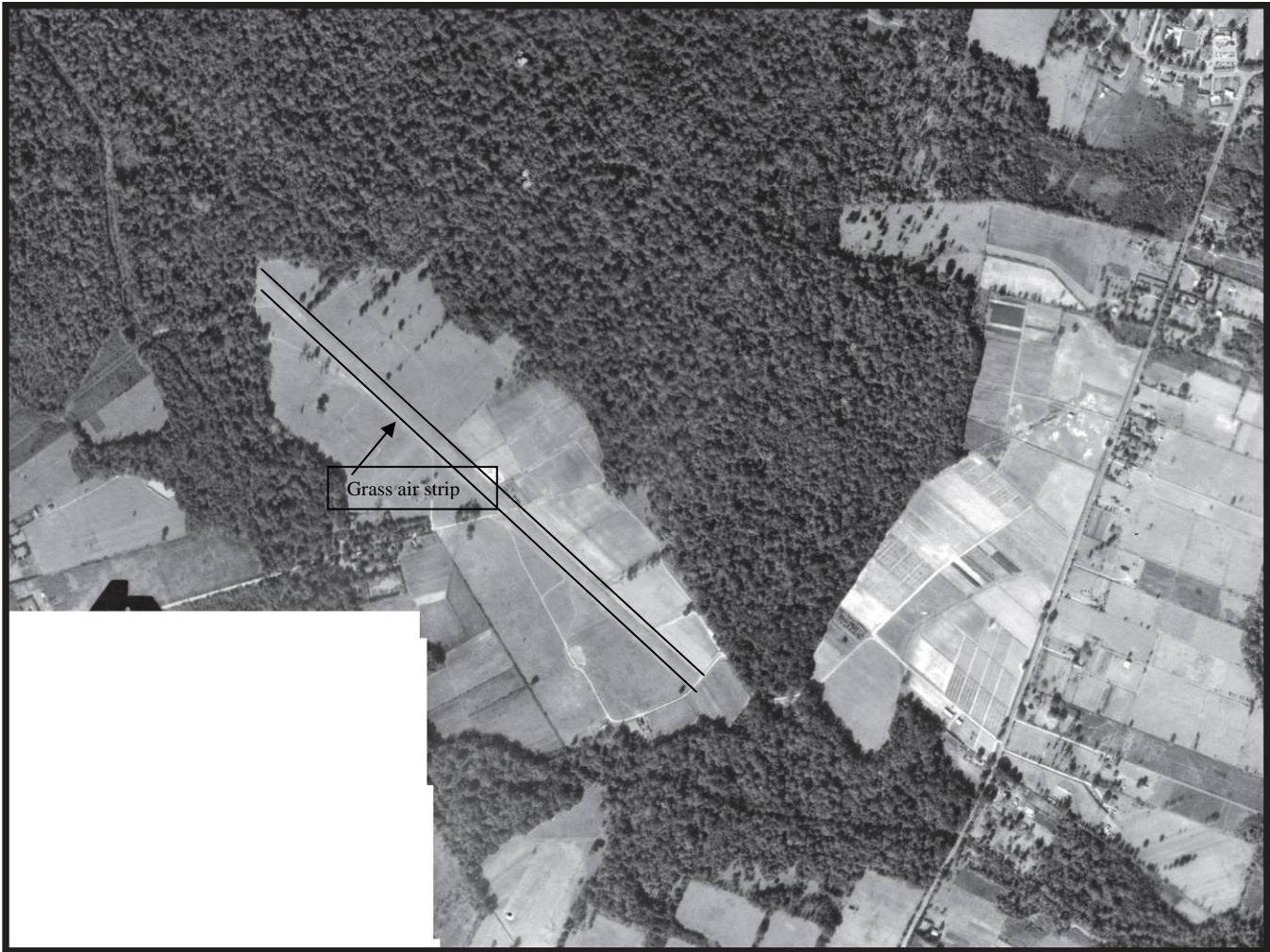


Figure 3: 1953 USDA Image, Burden Property. Grass landing strip outlined and labeled.

## 1953

Here, the first major changes to the Burden landscape are evident, with what is presumed to be a wide northwest/southeast strip which, from anecdotal evidence, would have been Pike Burden's landing strip for his aerial pursuits. This airstrip bisects the property in its entirety, and is fairly wide, which would have been typical for an informal grassed plain for takeoff and landing. Also, the agricultural pattern appears to be much more uniform, with almost all areas visible as grassed or field plots for cattle, except for some large fields to the right of the airstrip, which appear in various forms of production. According to records, most of the farm had been converted to cattle grazing by Miss Ollie (Ollie Brice Steele Burden, mother of Ione, Pike and Steele) following the death of her husband in 1925. The forested

perimeter still surrounds the property in all directions, creating a buffer around the farm, with some urban growth to the west along Perkins Road beginning to develop. The formal garden laid out by Steele Burden is obvious to the south of the main house and shows a perimeter outline of somewhat mature trees encircling the entire garden except on the southeast corner, where a small dirt service road exits the area.



**Figure 4: 1959 USDA Image, Burden Property**

## 1959

The most notable changes during the period between 1953 and 1959 are the maturation of the initial formal garden laid out by Steele Burden and the widening and clearing along Ward's Creek, creating a distinct buffer zone along this feature that is not

apparent in any previous photographs. Although not dated as to time of year, this image must have been taken in early spring, as the agricultural fields to the right of the airstrip have a lighter, white appearance, which is representative of freshly plowed bare earth, with crops either recently planted or very early in the growth season.



**Figure 5: 1967 USDA Image, Burden Property. Borrow pit used for interstate interchange construction is labeled in far northwest corner.**

## 1967

This image taken eight years after the previous aerial shows some encroachment into the agricultural areas of the farm by forest land, what appears to be a concrete, cleared, or channelized edge along Ward's Creek, and most notably the interstate on the northern edge of the property. Construction of the interstate marked the beginning of the noise pollution

that now pervades the northern portions of the site. What must have been a borrow pit on the northwest tip of the property has filled with water, and the wide airstrip grass “panel” bisecting the property is still very evident. While this image shows significant change over an eight year period, the photo taken six years later is the most striking in that it shows the largest and obviously permanent change to the Burden property – the addition of the Interstate 12 and Interstate 10 interchange.



**Figure 6: 1973 USDA Image, Burden Property**

### 1973

Between 1967 and 1973, the Interstate Highway Commission purchased a swath of land from the Burdens in order to construct the extension of Interstate 10, connecting to Interstate 12 to the north. This new interstate connector/construction divided the existing

woodlands to the northeast in two, and added significantly to the noise pollution at Burden. Pike Burden died in 1965 and presumably had stopped flying well before that, as the grass airstrip is no longer evident in the aerial. The barn and the buildings of the Rural Life Museum are evident, as is the “formalization” of some of the roadways, with a circular roundabout that signifies the entrance to the museum, and another roundabout at the end of what had been the airstrip creating a terminus where a large statue is placed. The agricultural areas have again taken on the characteristic linear patterns of crop plantings, as they are now being used by the LSU Agricultural Center for research purposes. An open area just to the south of the piney woods – which was part of the ornamental garden expansion – has been cleared, and a completely new neighborhood has appeared outside the northwest corner of the property.



**Figure 7: 1978 USDA Image, Burden Property**

## 1978

Five years later, Burden Plantation exhibits little change from its previous manifestation. The cleared area just to the south of the piney woods is now excavated and filled with water to create Lake Efferson, and two distinct islands in the new lake have been constructed. The expansion of agricultural plots for research has continued, and interstate interchanges onto Essen Lane have been constructed, creating easy access to the property where none existed before.

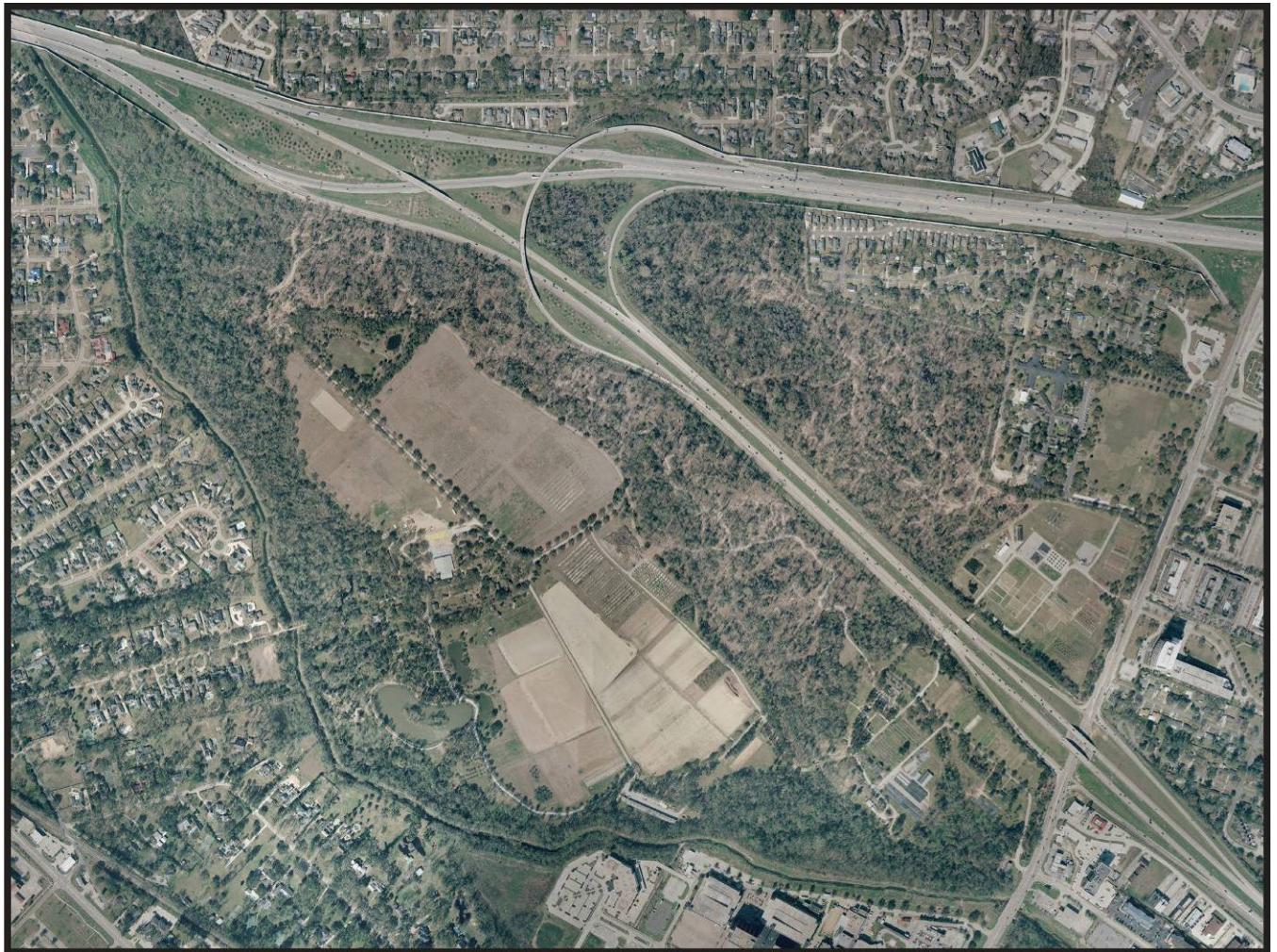


**Figure 8: 1989 USDA Image, Burden Property**

## 1989

In twelve years, there is little change to major roadways, the interstate construction has been completed, and the outline for the Barton Arboretum on the northwest corner of the property is evident. What is most striking about this image is the maturation of the tree

canopy. Roads previously devoid of flanking trees are now becoming alleés, with live oaks and crepe myrtles on either side of the roadways. Because of the angle of this particular photograph, it is now possible to see the varying heights of a maturing tree canopy in the forested areas, and to distinguish the large size of the visible trees.



**Figure 9: Circa 2009, Portico Image**

**2009, Portico image**

The passing of twenty years is a considerable gap in the aerial record, but with few major site initiatives, one would expect to see larger tree canopies and the expansion of urban sprawl in the areas surrounding the perimeter of the property. Those two things are usually clearly visible to the naked eye. The alleés of trees along the radial roadways have grown

much larger and urban sprawl has expanded around every side of the property. The perimeter of the arboretum area is now much more mature with a pond that adds to diversification possibilities within the arboretum ecosystem.

However, where one expects to see a maturing tree canopy, the forested area is riddled with voids, due to the huge amount of devastation from Hurricane Gustav on the northeast side of the property. One also sees the irregular arrangement of shell and dirt roadways created for the subsequent cleanup of hurricane damage. The Burden Foundation suggested – and the Ag Center concurred – that the treatment of the northeastern woods and the southwestern woods would be handled in completely different ways, with the northeastern woods cleaned up and reforested, while leaving damage in the southwestern woods in place to fall, rot, and regenerate in a natural way. These two different treatments are clearly visible, along with some thinning of the tree canopy in the formal areas closer to the Burden House and within Windrush Gardens due to hurricane damage. An area to the north of the Rural Life barn has been cleared for the new visitors' center for the museum, which has not yet begun construction as of the date of the photograph.

## Analysis of Pike Burden, Jr., Oblique Aerial Photographs from the 1940s



**Figure 10: Pike Burden oblique aerial photo - 1940s**

A very unusual resource available to the researchers is the existence of aerial photographs taken by Pike Burden sometime in the 1940s. These images, mostly taken at oblique angles from his personal airplane, are from a much lower elevation – therefore they exhibit a much higher resolution than the USDA images discussed above. We know that these photographs were taken sometime after 1942 because Pike's newly constructed home, designed by Richard Koch of New Orleans, has already been built and is visible.

Figures 10 and 11 are the most revealing, as they show several outbuildings and small homes on the Burden property, and also the two water bodies fed by an artesian well to the north of Steele Burden's studio and to the east of Pike's new home. Sometime in the past this well dried up. It is not known whether this was due to a "slip" in the nearby Baton Rouge fault that "broke" the underground spring channel, but the most likely explanation is drastic lowering of the groundwater level as Baton Rouge began to pump more and more water

during the 1950s from the aquifers underlying the city, as its urban growth exploded and the source for the artesian spring on the property no longer flowed above ground.

In Figure 11 below, the surrounding forest buffer is visible, as well as pastureland and row crops. Of additional interest is the background in the distance. It is clear that Burden is still very much located within a rural setting, with no discernible urban development until you get close to the Mississippi River. On the northernmost edge of the image is what appears to be the LSU Stadium, further to the right is the new Louisiana State Capitol, and further still at the upper right corner appear oil tanks at the Esso/Standard Oil (now Exxon Mobil) facility. Along both sides of the river, industrial activity is apparent, as well as some urban development to the south and west of the capitol.



**Figure 11: Pike Burden oblique aerial image.**



**Figure 12:** Aerial view of Burden Home, Garage, Garden House Studio, and Pike and Jeannette's old and new home, 1940s. The circular fountain behind the Burden Home consists of an inner and outer circle, and the axial design is very evident from above.



**Figure 13: Aerial view of Burden Home, Garden House Studio, and Pike and Jeannette's old and new home, 1940s. The ponds behind Steele's summer house and the Monroe home are labeled.**

Of particular note in this image are each of the two water bodies – one adjacent to Steele's garden house studio and the other across the road to the east of the Pike Burden home. According to John Monroe, these eventually drained through a pipe system into Ward's Creek. Also, palm trees flank the south facing corners of Steele Burden's garden house studio.



**Figure 14: Burden House, with formal gardens in foreground, circa 1940s.**

To the bottom right corner, the formal garden laid out by Steele Burden is shown with its long narrow beds with precise rectangular corners. Over time, these have been obscured through growth and mowing patterns, and now exhibit curvilinear edges, negating the crisp geometric angles and lines of the original design.

#### **Analysis of Historic Photographs from Burden Family Albums and other Sources**

Historic photographs rarely record the views that the researcher is most anxious to find. Landscapes and gardens were, and still are, often taken for granted as backdrops for daily life and family events, and are rarely photographed on their own merits. This is certainly the case with the Burden property and with Windrush Gardens. Fortunately, because the following photographs that survive were taken outside, each includes a portion of the landscape, and some reveal details that are important in documenting the appearance of

the site at a particular point in time, although it is not always possible to pinpoint dates for each photograph. Others document landscape features or entire gardens that no longer survive, leaving the photos as the sole documentary evidence of the existence of the garden in the past. This is the case with some of the first gardens that existed in the Burden photographic record—some of those surrounding the Burden Home prior to the design of Windrush Gardens, and the gardens of Pike Burden, Jr.’s, first cottage at Burden.

#### *Landscape surrounding the Burden House*

The original Burden House served as backdrop for several family photos, and in these, we can see a house that has the sense of being much lived in, as compared to its appearance today. The striped shades or match-stick blinds (depending upon the photo) across the front porch provided protection from harsh afternoon sun. An informal and narrow walkway led to the porch; the path was made of the same irregularly-shaped stones that connected the house to Pike, Jr.’s cottage. The foundation of the Burden House was heavily planted with shrubbery of contrasting and exuberant textures, in front of which giant elephant ears stand at heights nearing five to six feet.

What is most interesting in these early photos, however, are the features that no longer survive in the landscape—the rustic arbor to the north of the house, with its swing, approached by a vine laden archway (Figure 15); and the round feature in front of the house, encircled by conical evergreens, perhaps cedars or arborvitae, similar to those that lined the path to Pike and Jeannette’s cottage (Figure 22). Today this round bed in front of the house is planted with so much palmetto and other foliage added by Steele Burden and those who have followed him, that it is unrecognizable as the same feature.



Figure 15: Rustic arbor north of house with sundial in foreground.



Figure 16: Close-up of rustic arbor and yuccas.



**Figure 17:** Round feature in front of house.



**Figure 18:** Pool behind Burden House with cattails.



Figure 19: Jeannette, Miss Ollie, and Pike, Sr. in garden, circa 1922 to 1925.

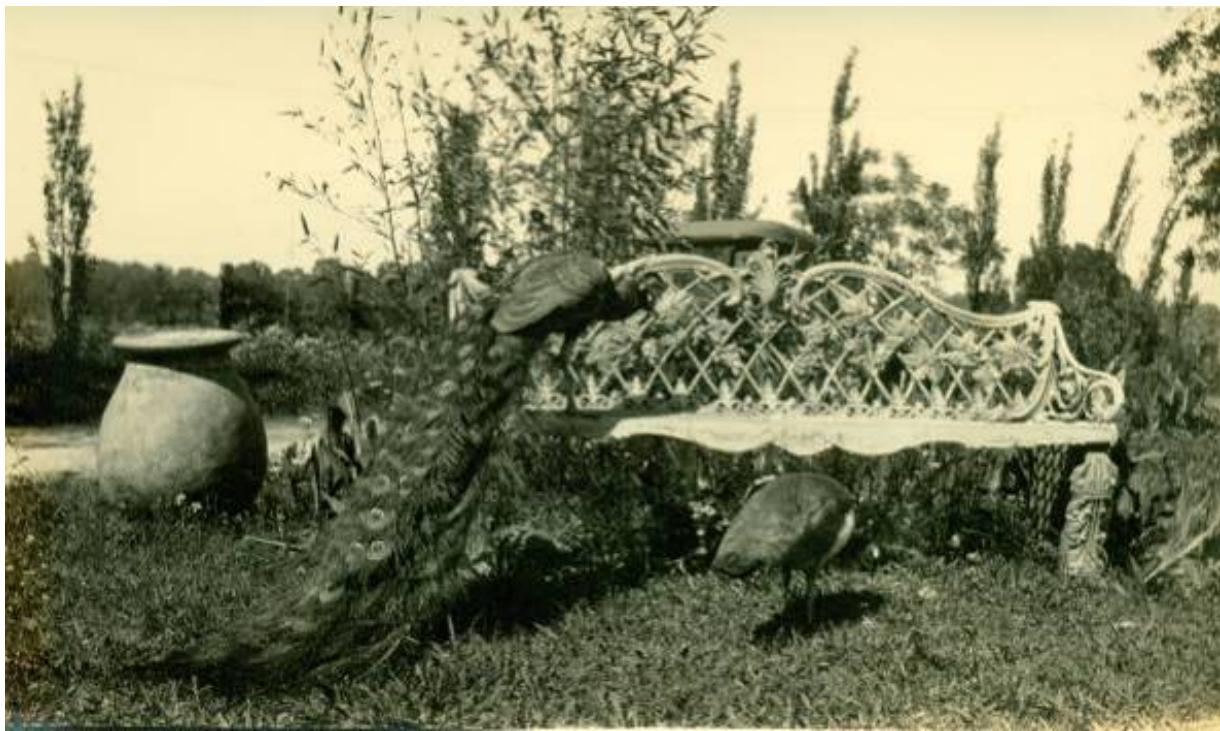
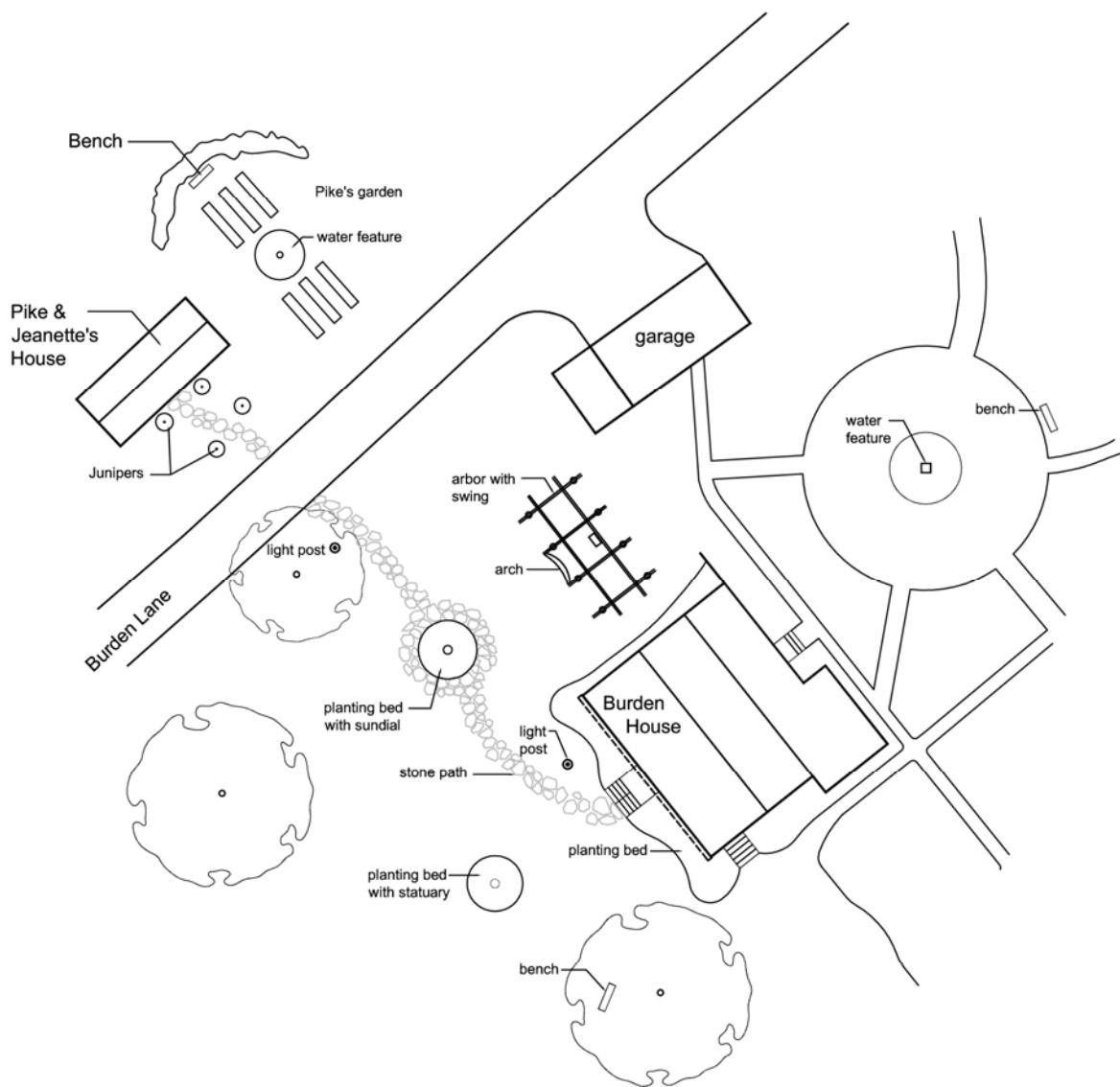


Figure 20: Iron bench and olive jar in Pike's garden near Burden Lane. The columnar trees in the background are probably Lombardy poplars, which were a fashionable fastigiate tree during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.



**Figure 21: Miss Ollie with peahens and urn on plinth. Exact location unknown.**



<b>sta</b> suzanne turner associates Landscape architecture Historic landscape preservation	N	The Burden Center First Layer of Occupancy by Pike, lone & Steele Burden 1923-1940	date : 10-28-2010
			scale : 1" = 30'-0"
			drawing :

*Gardens of the first house of Pike Burden, Jr.*

The early garden that is most thoroughly documented by photography is that of Pike Burden, Jr.'s, first house, located across from the Burden House and facing Burden Lane, which had a garden that was larger than the house and quite expressive in its detail. It is not clear whether the garden was the creation of Pike and his wife Jeannette, or whether Miss Ollie and Steele had a hand in it as well. From the various views that are recorded in the photos, it seems clear that it was a point of pride, a place for outdoor gathering, a home for quite a few peacocks and peahens, as well as the occasional duck, goose, and even deer, and that it included one of almost every garden ornament and landscape design convention popular at the time. The house was built in 1923, and presumably the garden followed shortly thereafter. The garden survived until c. 1940, when Pike and Jeannette Burden made the decision to build a much larger home nearby, and moved their cottage to the back of the lot to use as a study or guest house. Their garden was destroyed in the process; the footprint of their new home necessitated the removal of this first garden.

The garden was naïve or quaint in its design and somewhat miniaturized in its detail (to match the scale of the house), with small pointed cedars flanking the entry, and pairs of these trees along the entry walkway, which was constructed of irregularly shaped stones laid with grass between them. (Figure 22) Identical wooden trellises decorated the front façade of the little house and flanked the front doorway, with what look like roses climbing up nearly to the eaves of the roof. (Figure 23) The side yard to the east was a sort of garden room, although it was not enclosed by either walls or vegetation. Low plantings that might eventually form an enclosure can be seen in the photos. The central feature was a small fish pond or pool with a single water jet shooting several feet into the air. The pond had a brick coping, and clumps of what appeared to be flag or cemetery iris were planted at edge of the brick. (Figures 25, 26)

Garden furnishings and ornaments were located throughout the space including a concrete bench, a wrought iron bench, a folding French garden chair, an olive jar, and an iron urn and pedestal. To one side of the fish pond, several long narrow beds can be seen although the photo is not clear enough to discern what kind of plantings are in these beds (Figure 28). It could be a garden of hybrid tea roses, newly planted. Young bamboo plants can be seen

behind the iron bench in one of the images, so perhaps the garden room was intended to be enclosed by a hedge of thick cane to separate it from the larger surrounding landscape.



**Figure 22:** View of front façade of the cottage of Pike and Jeannette Burden. View is from Burden House side of Burden Lane looking north.



Figure 23: Façade of Pike Burden cottage showing French doors, trellis, iron garden chair, and peacocks.

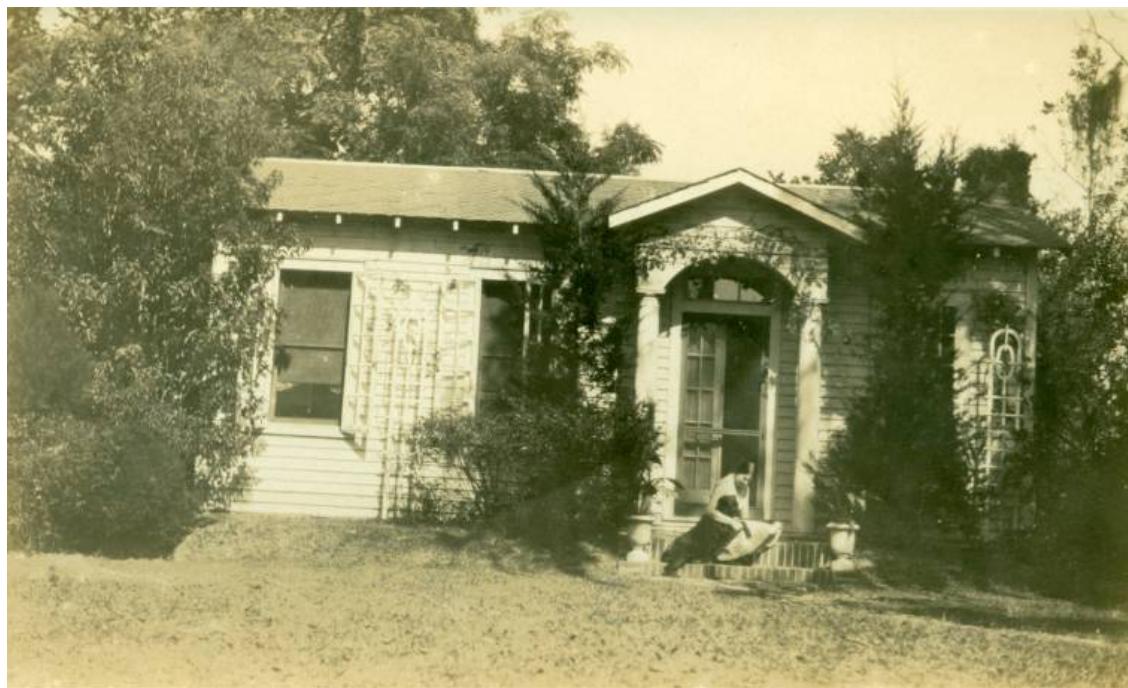


Figure 24: Later shot of cottage; cedars are now taller than ridgeline of roof, planting on left trellis is missing. Shrubbery hides corners of building.

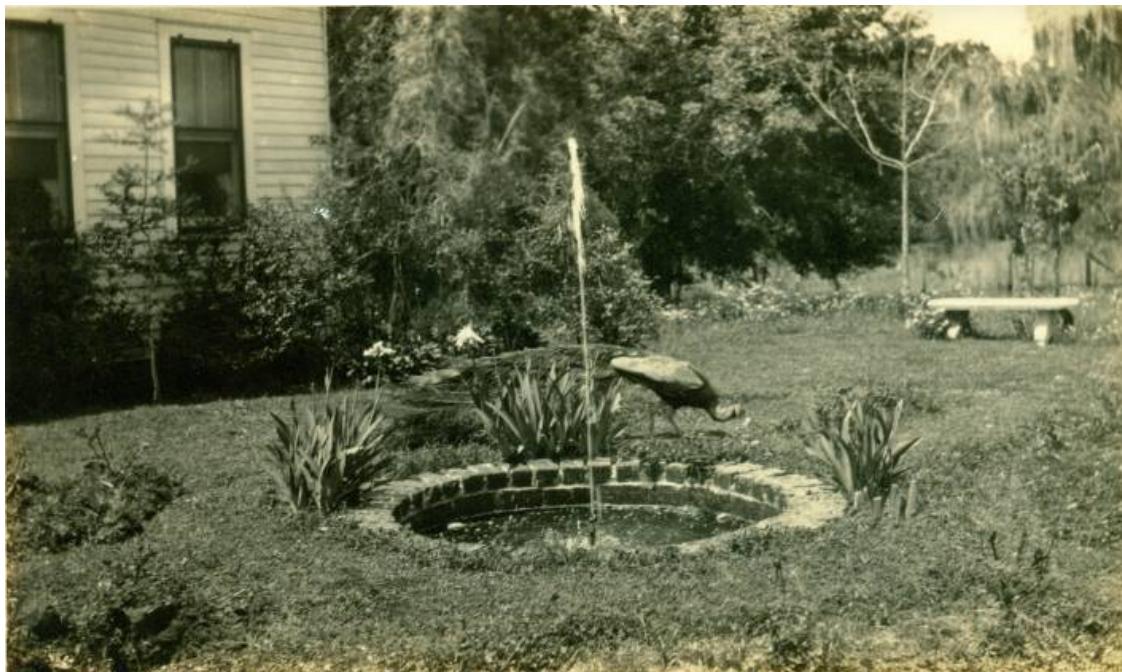


Figure 25: Small garden and pool to right (east) of cottage with iris blooming at edge; no enclosure of space yet, concrete bench in background.



Figure 26: Close-up of brick-edged pool and fountain with iris plantings.



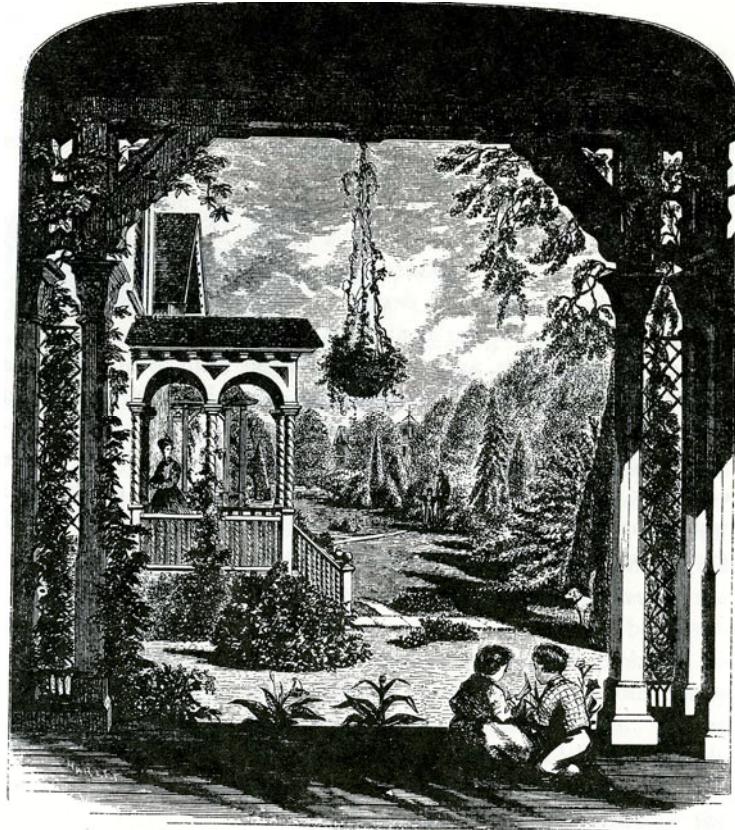
**Figure 27:** Overview of what appears to be a fairly “young” garden with raised linear flower beds surrounding central pool, and a Canadian goose wandering through.



**Figure 28:** View from opposite direction (looking south), from Pike’s cottage across Burden Lane to Burden Home on extreme left. Note white French folding garden chair (center).

### *Summary of first Burden gardens documented by photography*

It is impossible to know who actually designed the early gardens that are pictured adjacent to the first homes of the Burdens. They are similar to each other in style and character and seem to have been shaped by the same hand or hands. They are a carry-over from the Victorian era, a time typically associated with mid-nineteenth century to the turn-of-the century in the American South. These gardens were highly ornamental, bold and experimental in their use of plant materials, using a variety of species, often new plants dramatic in shape or foliage and newly introduced from the tropics. Victorians loved garden ornament. Because air-conditioning was not yet widely available at the residential level, spending lots of time out-of-doors was common, and so various forms of garden seats were popular and necessary. Indoor furniture was also moved out into the landscape for outdoor living during the hot summer months when living inside the house could be stifling.



**Figure 29:** This illustration from Frank J. Scott's 1870 *The Art of Beautifying Suburban Home Grounds* includes typical Victorian garden details such as pyramidal conifers, vines ornamenting building facades, and exotic foliage plants.

The design qualities that were not a part of the vocabulary of the Victorians are the design of architectonic garden rooms, the use of axial geometry and axes to move a person through a series of garden rooms, the unification of these rooms by simplification of the plant palette, and concentration of evergreen plantings to achieve a three-dimensional spatial quality. These would become characteristics of the gardens that Steele Burden would eventually create for the Burden property, the gardens that would come to be called Windrush.

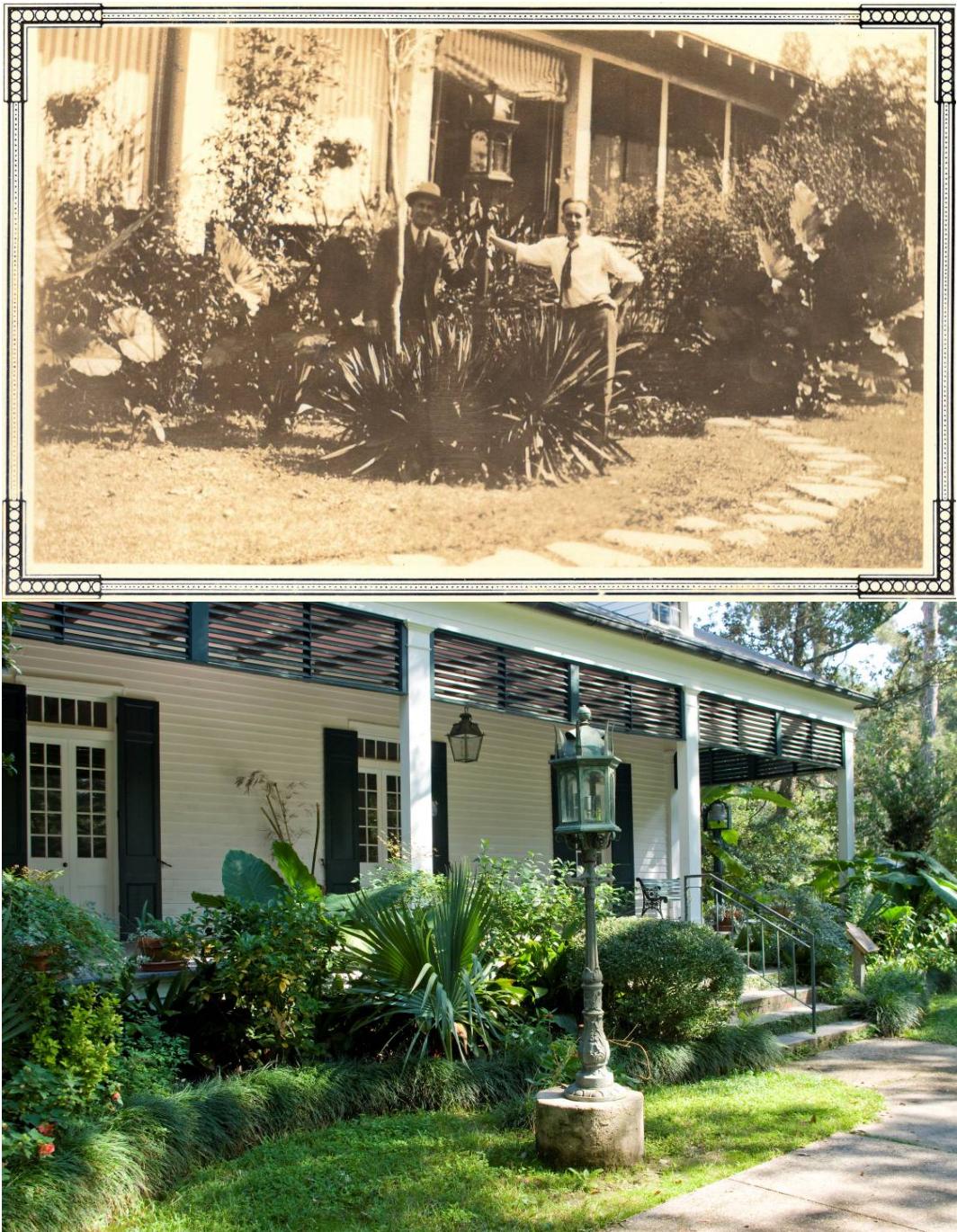
### ***Repeat Photography***

STA has used the technique of “repeat photography” to analyze the remainder of the historic photographs of Burden. Repeat photography is a tool used to study landscape change. An existing historic photograph is matched, by shooting from the same benchmark of the original photographer. The resultant pair of photographs provides an unbiased inventory of what was and what is currently visible as part of a landscape, documenting the effect that time has had on the particular scene. The ultimate lesson of viewing these pairs of photographs is the amount of vegetative change that has occurred in most cases, and yet the remarkable amount of continuity in the overall views, in many cases, provided by the architectural or sculptural focal points. Unfortunately, the historic photographs of Burden are not dated, so we can only estimate their dates.



**Figure 30: Burden Home place and front lawn      1922-25, 2010**

Minor architectural changes to the house have been made, with dormers and a central chimney, and shutters and louvers added, and the number and size of columns reduced. The live oak to the right of the house has increased in size dramatically. Crape myrtles have been planted on both sides of the house. Azaleas are planted underneath the oak's canopy. Evergreen Japanese yew fills what was formerly an open view to a hedge of shrubbery in the background from the earlier view. To the left of the house in the historic photo, one can barely see the support post of the former rustic arbor that, we know from other photos, supported and shaded a swing.



**Figure 31: Close-up #1 of Burden Home and its front yard 1922-25, 2010**

The lamp and its post remain the same, as does the elephant ear. Nearly everything else has changed, from the detailing of the porch, the material of the pathway, to the delineation of the planting bed. Both photos document attempts to mediate the effect of the western sun on the porch, but the earlier photo shows more exuberant plantings, while today's plantings, while still quite varied in their textures, are carefully contained within their monkey grass border, and have been neatly pruned.



Figure 32: Close-up #2 of Burden Home and its front yard, circa 1935, 2010

It is conjectured that this is a later photo than #1 (the previous pair) because of the proliferation of elephant ears in front of the house, knowing that this plant tends to spread quite aggressively. The yuccas no longer decorate the base of the lamppost. Now a concrete or painted iron urn sits atop a masonry column at the base of the front steps, and is planted with a spike-like species that cannot be identified, perhaps aloe or asparagus fern. A swing set is on the front porch; it may have been there in #1, but the striped awnings would have hidden it. A chifferobe or some kind of cabinet with a glass door furnishes the porch between the front doors. There are no shutters, and one cannot see whether the doors are French doors or not. The right-hand portion of the porch is enclosed with screen, becoming a separate indoor-outdoor room or bedroom if the enclosure is solid. In the 2010 photo, the sweet olive on the left-hand corner has matured significantly, and Louisiana palmettos have been added to the foundation planting bed. Only a single elephant ear (*Colocasia*) is visible.



**Figure 33: Large lily pod with sculpture behind Burden Home      1922-25, 2010**

This historic view of the central pool behind the Burden house is so faded that one can barely discern its details. The same sculpture that graces the pool today is apparent in the earlier photo. Water lilies and tall aquatic reeds or cattails are planted in the water. Several clumps of iris occur around the coping of the pool. Two men sit on a bench behind the pool. Planting beds seem to surround the water feature. It is impossible to determine if the bench in the 2010 photo is the same as in the earlier one. The vase-shaped small trees to the right of the pool are visible in both photos. The 2010 view has no vegetation in the foreground as the earlier photo does; the background plant materials are far denser than the earlier shot. Instead of iris at the edge of the pool, water pickerel can be seen in the 2010 view on the right. The tall reeds no longer grow in the pond and the lawn area has spread outward over time.



Figure 34: Close-up of large lily pool behind Burden Home      1922-25, 2010

It is possible to see that the planting beds behind the pool are outlined in the early photo, and that the central path exists although it does not seem as well defined. There are no boxwood or hollies clipped into the shape of balls in the earlier photo. Crape myrtles flank the central path in the 2010 shot, and one can be seen on the right side of the path in the early photo; the left-hand one may be covered by the tall reeds, perhaps cattails, in the pool. In the historic photo it is possible to see the contrasting textures and play of light of the dark-foliaged evergreen shrubs in the background versus the deciduous and more transparent ones in the foreground, a characteristic of Steele Burden's planting designs.



**Figure 35: Lake and islands beyond Windrush Gardens - circa 1970s, 2010**

The major difference is that the pavilion has been added at the lake's edge for viewing. Vegetation on the lake edge is natural in the early photo; ornamentals like banana and pittosporum have been added by 2010. A narrow foot bridge for goats leads from one island to the other – visible in the 2010 photo.



**Figure 36: Steele Burden's Garden House north elevation, circa 1960, 2010**

The pond in the foreground that was fed by an artesian spring in the early photo has disappeared by 2010, although the cypress at its edge remains, and seems to be about the same size. A sugar kettle now serves as the water feature and focal point to be viewed from the glass doors of Burden's tiny studio. Earlier photographs show French doors where there are now sliding glass doors.



**Figure 37: Bridge connecting entry area including Conference Center, Rose Garden, and Orangerie, to large horticultural plots, Rural Life Museum, Burden House, and Windrush Gardens. 2006, 2010**

This bridge had to be widened and re-engineered prior to construction of the new visitors' center at Rural Life Museum in order to accommodate heavy equipment for utility infrastructure installation. This example illustrates how critical scale is in maintaining the integrity of Burden's landscape design and plan. By changing the width from a single wide lane to two-way traffic, the feeling and flow of a rural roadway has been destroyed. The removal of the plantings also completely changed the intimate feeling of what had been an important transition in the visitor's sequence as experienced from an automobile, tractor, or truck.

*Portfolio of Garden Sculpture in their Landscape Settings* - after circa 1965, 2010

The following photos could have been taken by Steele Burden; their dates are purely conjectural. If the photos were all taken at the same time as an inventory, the most recently acquired piece was purchased in 1965, making the date of the photos post-1965.



**Figure 38: Woman pouring, zinc, acquired 1925**

In the early photo, the water jet shoots up; today it is aimed down. In the early photo the pool is lined with what looks like liriope; none exists today. A single-trunk tree was originally to the right of the woman; today it is a multi-trunk crape myrtle. The well is on axis down the central path, but in the 2010 photo, the base is covered with vines. Ginger lilies are the predominant herbaceous planting in the beds of the early photo; the 2010 photo shows thick liriope borders and clipped evergreen balls, with colorful coleus to the right.



**Figure 39: Bacchus, stone, acquired 1940**

The original base seems higher than the brick base of today, but that may be a distortion of the camera angle. The base was covered in Algerian ivy, with a circle of aspidistra and then more ivy as ground cover. Today a few straggly dwarf azaleas surround the base, which is devoid of vines. In the early shot, a gracefully branching small tree with a single trunk arched over Bacchus; today a multi-trunk evergreen tree, a Japanese yew, is the backdrop. This must be a location where there was heavy storm damage because what seemed like dense shade in the early shot is today far more dappled and open. Information from various sources states that Steele Burden typically used concrete pipes capped with a slate slab to mount the statuary, but that David Floyd convinced Burden and others that brick bases were more permanent and aesthetically pleasing. This could be the reason that the aspect of the sculpture appears lower now than in earlier photographs.



**Figure 40: Mercury whispering to Hermes (Zeus), bronze, acquired 1935**

The carefully proportioned brick base is today covered with fig ivy which totally conceals the base. A crisp arc of liriope outlined the area behind and around the base in a semi-circle, with the varying textures and scales of the foliage neatly falling within the border. Today, there seems to be no border, gravel has replaced what was originally lawn, aspidistra fills the bed area behind, a Sasanqua camellia arches inward, and the sunlight catches the large trunk of a hardwood tree in the background.



**Figure 41: Athena or Wounded Amazon, marble**

These views are more consistent than any of the other photos of sculpture. Aspidistra still surrounds the pedestal, and primarily evergreen, shade-loving plantings fill the beds along the gravel paths. The path in the 2010 photo is wider near the sculpture, but narrows as it moves into the woodland. The pine trunks in the background have not changed much in size, but the clarity of the camellias or azaleas beneath them has been obscured with the passage of time. A camellia japonica has been added behind Athena for backdrop in the 2010 view. The size of the trunk immediately to the right of Athena has not changed significantly in the intervening years. There is confusion as to what the exact title of this statue should be.



**Figure 42: Atalanta running, iron, 1964**

The grass around the base of the piece has been replaced and the area is covered with gravel. The border of the planting bed is gone. The multi-trunk crape myrtle immediately behind the sculpture is also gone in the 2010 shot, a victim of Gustav. Most significantly, construction in the background has ruined the closed nature of the view. In the upper figure, the statue appears to have been painted white.

## **FOUR: Existing Conditions**

### **Character-Defining Features**

This chapter describes the existing conditions of the Burden Center using the categories recommended by the National Park Service. An existing conditions plan accompanies the section. The plan organizes the site into landscape zones and then describes some of the major issues related to the historic and cultural nature of the landscape.

STA staff visited the site numerous times over the course of the CLR project, covering all seasons. Numerous photographs were taken and field notes compiled. These notes, photographs, and observations serve as the baseline record of the landscape, creating a systematic process for documentation of the site. Part of the landscape preservation process is to implement measures that ensure that future changes to the cultural landscape are recorded in a consistent and timely manner, so that historians and planners of the future will have the benefit of the initial CLR along with subsequent record-keeping of maintenance and management.

#### ***Natural systems, features, and topography***

The main natural system running along the length of Burden is Ward's Creek. The original path of the creek was picturesque and meandering, and acted as a property boundary for the Burden Plantation. Today the creek has been channelized with only remnants of the original creek remaining. Wetlands exist on the northwest corner of the site, the remnants of a borrow pit from interstate construction.

There are several artificial ponds located on the site. The largest pond is to the south of the Burden Home with two small islands in the center. There is a smaller pond to the east of this larger one. There is also a pond located in the northern portion of the property in the Barton Memorial Arboretum.

Much of the Burden property is covered in woodlands that surround the property, with the largest wooded area concentrated along the Interstate 10 corridor. Much of these woodlands were climax hardwood forest, now devastated by Hurricane Gustav.

The natural topography of the site is relatively flat, with the highest area being the agricultural plots in the middle of the property, from which point the land slopes back towards the creek and towards the Baton Rouge fault. Occasional berms onsite were created using soil excavated during pond construction.



**Figure 43. Arboretum area with pond.**



**Figure 44:** The pond at the Barton Arboretum, 2010.



**Figure 45:** A perimeter road encircles the large pond at the edge of Windrush, 2010.



**Figure 46:** Another view of large pond with island in the center of the pond, 2010.



**Figure 47:** Open field with forested edge.



**Figure 48: Hurricane Gustav damage.**



**Figure 49: Debris pile from Gustav.**

Images 43-46 are constructed topographic features and ponds; the last three (47 to 49) are of the climax forest bordering the interstate, showing the woodland edge, Hurricane Gustav damage and the temporary construction road used to haul out debris, and finally, one of the debris piles, 2010.

### ***Spatial organization***

The property is spatially separated into several different entities or zones. The first space experienced by the visitor is the entrance area from Essen Lane. This area currently serves as the only entrance to the site. There are crape myrtles along the drive as the visitor arrives and proceeds towards the Ione Burden Conference Center while passing by an area of horticulture experimental plots. There is another set of agricultural plots that can be accessed via the small road to the north of the conference center. It leads to a small tunnel passage underneath the interstate. The interstate divided the property into two parcels, making it necessary to access the tunnel to reach the other portion of the Burden property. On the northern side of the interstate there are several more acres of agricultural plots and research buildings.

Back on the entry road, the terminus of this first section of roadway is the conference center. South of this one-story building is the Steele Burden Memorial Orangerie, with an ornamental formal garden in front. A parking lot serves these two facilities, as well as the hiking trail. Behind the orangerie, out of view, is the entrance to *Trees and Trails*, an educational hiking path with native tree species labeled. Also in this area is a large demonstration rose garden, portions of the Vi Stone camellia collection planted under the trees, and several green houses.

A wooden bridge flanked by palm trees marks a transition for the motorist as he moves from this first horticultural and public meeting section to the next portion of the property. The visitor then approaches the agricultural demonstration plots that form the core in the middle of the Burden property. This acreage is a large open expanse whose appearance and spatial sense varies depending on the season and the crops being tested.

Through the agricultural fields one notices a change in the landscape, and some vernacular cabins come into view on the left-hand side of the road in the distance. This is a preview of the Rural Life Museum ahead. The visitor comes to a roundabout and an oak allée drive, the parking lot, and the newly constructed visitors' center. From this point, the visitor moves on foot through the museum, and through Windrush Gardens, viewing the Burden Home, and if ambitious, the extension of Windrush through the pines and around the ponds. The old live oak lined drive, gardens filled with mature trees, and the home nestled amongst

it all set this space apart from the rest of the property. This area is distinctly different in its planting style, from the two formal gardens, various garden spaces, hostler's house, studio, wooded garden, as well as the Monroe's 1940s home and guest house.

Back in the car, the visitor can drive to an area remote from the rest of the site that is open to the public, the Barton Memorial Arboretum to the far north west of the property. This area consists of a variety of tree and plant species as well as a small pond.



**Figure 50: Entrance from Essen Lane.**



**Figure 51:** View of turf grass plots.



**Figure 52:** “Tunnel” under interstate.



**Figure 53:** Vi Stone camellia collection.



**Figure 54:** Ione Burden Conference Center.



Figure 55: Steele Burden Memorial Orangerie, behind a formal planting of crape myrtles.



Figure 56: Rose garden.



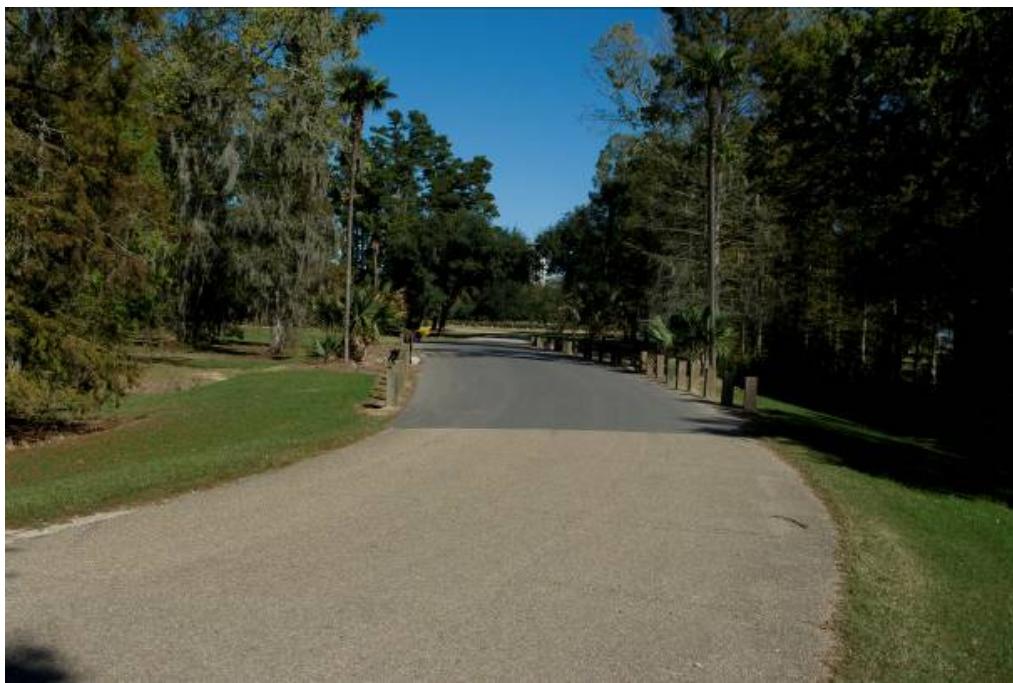
**Figure 57:** Rose garden and horticultural zone.



**Figure 58:** Interpretive signage for Trees and Trails.



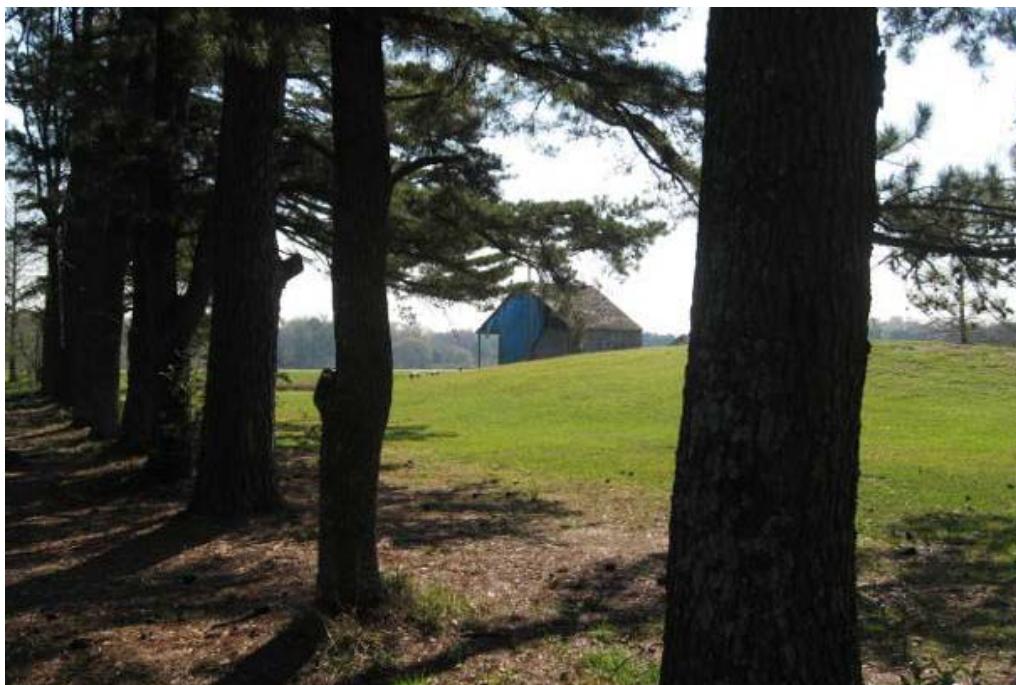
**Figure 59:** Detail of interpretive signage for Trees and Trails.



**Figure 60:** Bridge as transition between zones.



**Figure 61:** Rows of vegetable research plots.



**Figure 62:** Transition to zone of rural Life Museum.



**Figure 63:** Rural Life Museum Visitors' Center.



**Figure 64:** Hostler's House.



**Figure 65:** Memorial plaque at entrance to Barton Memorial Arboretum



**Figure 66:** Gravel drive and view into arboretum.



**Figure 67: Pond within the arboretum.**

### ***Land use***

The Burden Center's main land uses are research, education and recreation. One might say that the over-riding land use of all portions of the site, except for the Monroe home (which is private residential) is education, by virtue of its university ownership and stewardship. More specifically, those portions that are administered by the Ag Center are related to research and outreach, while the Rural Life Museum is used primarily for education and tourism. The Barton Arboretum is certainly educational as well, and is also used as passive recreation. The Trees and Trails program is the closest thing on the site to a programmed, active resource recreation and exploration.



**Figure 68: Agricultural research plots at entry.**



**Figure 69: Education and tourism at Rural Life.**



Figure 70: Education and recreation at Trees and Trails: The Palmetto Trail.



Figure 71: Education and recreation at Trees and Trails.

### ***Cultural traditions***

There are many cultural traditions associated with the Burden landscape, but the predominant one is rural agriculture. The land areas that are currently used as agricultural fields today are the same fields that the first generation of the Burden family also used for planting and grazing cattle.

The Rural Life Museum is an institution whose purpose is essentially to preserve and celebrate the cultural traditions of the Burden landscape and its past history, along with that of the cultural traditions of rural Louisiana. Much of what a visitor experiences, from the winding quality of the roadway alignment, to the traditional tree plantings in alleés along the roads, to the field patterns, the fence styles, and the tree and shrub varieties, represent cultural traditions of the larger Louisiana landscape. Even as new research is conducted by the Agricultural Center, there is a sense that the projects are part of a larger landscape whose patterns are to be respected and incorporated into future plans.



**Figure 72: Barn in Windrush Gardens.**



Figure 73: Longhorn cattle grazing.



Figure 74: Peach orchard.



**Figure 75:** Bee hives.



**Figure 76:** Demonstration kitchen garden at Rural Life.

### ***Cluster arrangements***

Clusters are the pattern that would typify most settlements in rural Louisiana, and there have been several layers of clusters on the Burden property, depending on which time period is being examined. The first cluster would have included the original Burden Home, which may have originally had a detached kitchen behind it, and other outbuildings including a privy and storage sheds. To the east of the main house were the hostler's house (still extant), and tenants' homes, a barn and a silo, as well as livestock pens and grazing fields (Tucker, 1997, as quoted in Stakely, 1997). Burden Lane would have served as the main entrance to the property and explains the direction of the home's orientation.



**Figure 77: The barn would have originally been one of several farm structures and animal pens.**

A second historic layer would have been that from the 1940s after Pike Burden, Jr., built his larger home, creating a Burden family residential cluster near the original Burden Home that included the 1940s West Indies style Koch-designed home, along with the 1920s cottage that had been moved to the west in order to accommodate the new house. Many of the ancillary structures that had supported life in the original home had disappeared by this time.

The next significant layer is that of the buildings associated with the Rural Life Museum, which is the site cluster containing the most structures, and representing the most intentional arrangement. The original museum, now with the new visitors' center attached to it, was the first in this group of buildings. Within close proximity to the museum are the traditional buildings that were typical in the southern Louisiana landscape.



**Figure 78:** The buildings and outbuildings at Rural Life are arranged in clusters as they would have been in the nineteenth century landscape.



**Figure 79: Example of outbuilding at Rural Life.**

There is a cluster of horticultural-related structures east of the rose garden that includes greenhouses and storage sheds. These are used by the Agricultural Extension Service as well as by the Master Gardener's Program.



**Figure 80:** Contemporary working structures continue to be arranged in clusters, just as they were in the past. This building is the turf research barn.



**Figure 81:** Greenhouses are grouped together to facilitate maintenance and propagation work.

Related to this cluster is the combination of the conference center and the orangerie, two relatively new buildings intended for use by both university and public groups, located adjacent to each other in order to share a common parking lot.

## *Circulation*

### **Auto**

The design of the roadways into and through Burden is fairly circuitous. One main road provides access from Essen Lane, and leads either to the Rural Life Museum or to a terminus at the Barton Arboretum. A minor road that leaves the main road right before the conference center is for LSU staff use only, and leads to the tunnel under the interstate to other agricultural plots, connecting the two sides of the property. Originally the main entrance would have been along Burden Lane, but this is now a shared entrance for the Monroes and residents of the adjacent neighborhood.



**Figure 82: Brick columns beyond entry.**



**Figure 83: Crape myrtles on entry road.**

### **Pedestrian**

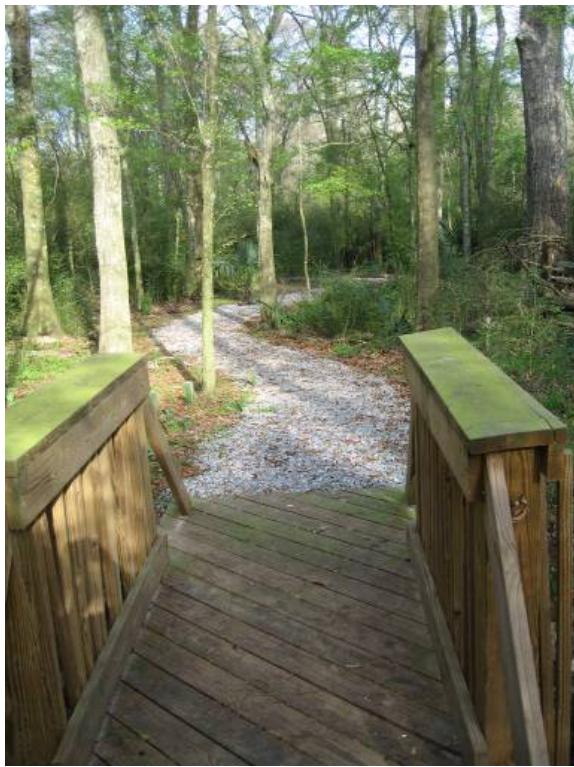
There are several areas of pedestrian circulation on the site. The major pedestrian walkways are made of pea gravel, while the recent Trees and Trails path is crushed limestone. The scale of these aggregates distinguishes them as pedestrian paths. The paths are a typical width of four feet, but can narrow at times to as little as two feet in width.

The highest amount of pedestrian traffic occurs around the museum, museum complex/village, and Windrush Gardens. These areas have distinct connections to each other and the visitor can move seamlessly in and out of these spaces. This pedestrian zone continues from the original portion of Windrush Gardens through the newer extension of the gardens in the pine woods, and on toward the ponds.

The other main pedestrian areas are in the entrance area. There are several horticultural display gardens that can be wandered through by visitors, as well as the orangerie and its gardens. Lastly, there is the Trees and Trails sequence with its trailhead behind the conference center.



**Figure 84:** The beginning of the path for Trees and Trails is concrete.



**Figure 85:** After the bridge the path surface is crushed limestone.

## ***Vegetation***

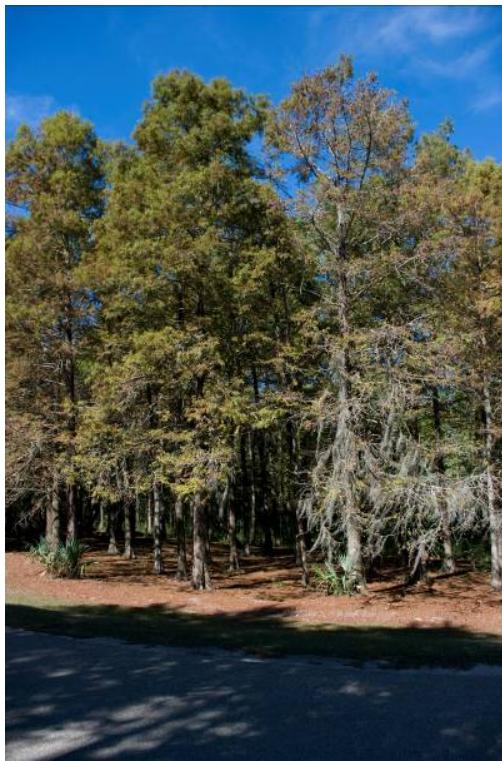
During the course of the development of the Burden Center there has been a vast amount of plant introduction into the existing landscape. The oak-lined roads, Windrush Garden, and much of the woods surrounding the property were planted, each in its own way. The gardens were designed “from scratch” on land that was formerly pasture with little or no existing trees or other vegetation. Some gardens were created in a formal layout while others were more wooded and informal. The plant palette for the ornamental gardens at both the Pike Burden cottage and the Burden House was fairly limited in scope, and consisted of some of the more typical and traditional plants of the early Louisiana garden, including crape myrtles, japonica and sasanqua camellias, azaleas, ligustrum, nandina, sweet olive, bamboo, roses, and aspidistra, with some “popular” plants like the Lombardy poplar.



**Figure 86: Crape myrtle and palmetto planted in Rural Life yard.**

The woodlands, however, are a different story. The woods on the northern portion of the interstate were much as they had been for a century until Hurricane Gustav blew through in 2008, devastating the mature canopy. Most of the other wooded areas on the property were either the result of natural succession or were planted by Steele Burden, beginning with

stands of cypress, pine, and oak trees, some planted in rows or grids. Once sufficient shade was established to plant underneath, Burden then began planting understory collections of southern favorites such as azaleas and camellias.



**Figure 87: Grove of cypress planted by Steele Burden.**

### ***Building and Structures***

For the purposes of clarity and preservation analysis, the buildings on the Burden property are organized according to their date of construction, and based upon whether they have been moved to their current location, or exist in their original location (highest degree of integrity).

Nineteenth century structures on their original sites include the Burden Home place (ca. 1856 for original structure) and the Hostler's House. Buildings dating from 1900-1950 on their original sites include the Pike Burden, Jr., home designed by architect Richard Koch (c. 1940), and the brick garden house built by Steele Burden in Windrush Gardens (1926).



Figure 88: Original Burden House, circa 1856.



Figure 89: Pike Burden House, R. Koch, c.1940.



**Figure 90: Garden house studio, 1926.**

The next group of buildings is the historic nineteenth century structures on exhibit at the Rural Life Museum that date from either the antebellum or postbellum periods, but have been moved to the site from their original locations in rural Louisiana.

The next building is an early twentieth century cottage, Pike Burden, Jr.'s, original home (c. 1923), that was moved in 1940 to a nearby site to make way for his larger home.



**Figure 91: Pike Burden cottage, c. 1923.**

Then there are modern buildings constructed after 1950 that exist on their original locations, including the conference center, the orangerie, the greenhouses, and other research and maintenance buildings associated with the Agriculture Center, the brick ranch-style caretaker's residence near the Essen Lane gate, the display barn at Rural Life Museum, and the new visitors' center.

Finally, there are the buildings on display at the Rural Life Center that were built by W. J. Brown and Steele Burden in the 1970s and 1980s as reconstructions of vernacular house types to complete the "assemblage" of styles that Burden wanted to represent in the village.



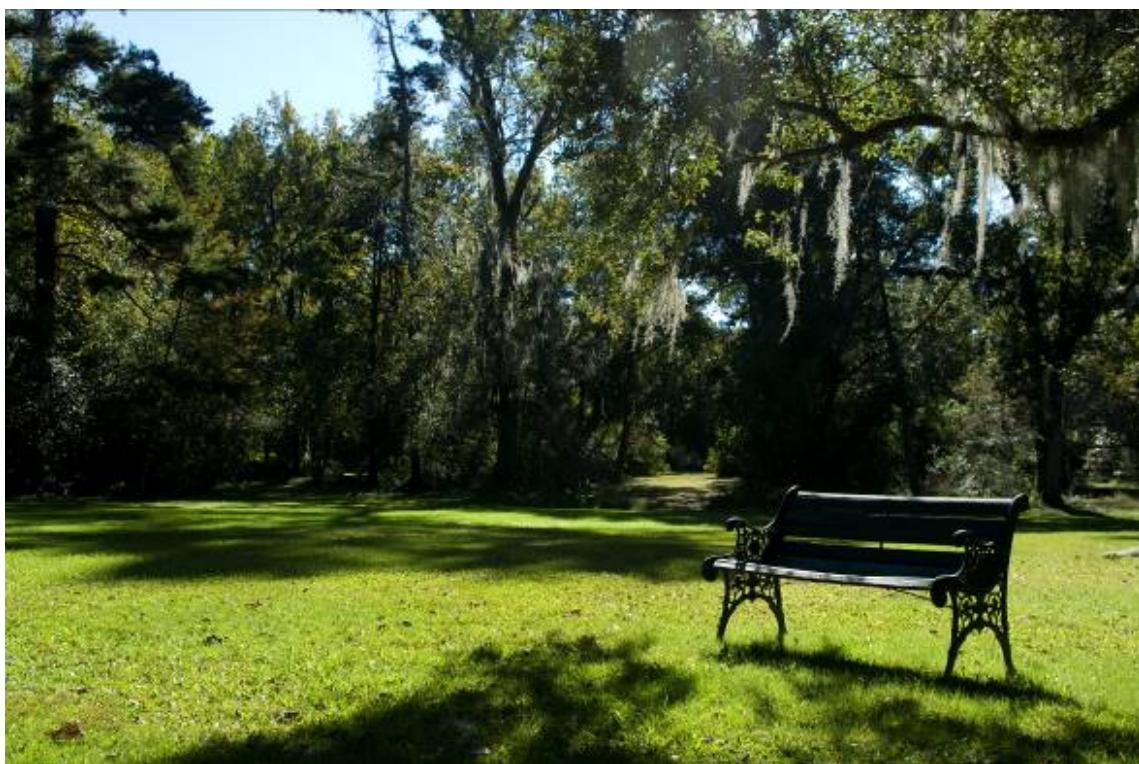
**Figure 92: Pigeonnaire, Windrush Gardens.**

### *Views and Vistas*

The site is made up primarily of controlled views and vistas. Landscape designer Steele Burden was intent on controlling the visitors' viewshed, thereby creating a highly sophisticated sequence of views of the rural landscape. Everything that Burden laid out had a field of view in mind. The entry drive allows for a range of views, with the visitor first dramatically turning into the site without knowing what to expect, then seeing the first horticultural plots, passing the rose gardens and the Ione Burden Conference Center, and then into tree cover and over a bridge, until the view dramatically opens to an expansive view of agricultural fields. At this point, there are both the views of the fields and surrounding landscape, and also a vista to the destination point at the roundabout.



**Figure 93:** View to conference center.



**Figure 94:** View across front lawn at Windrush.



**Figure 95: Oak allée with roundabout at end.**

Burden's use of views and vistas is most evident in the gardens at Windrush, experienced at the pedestrian scale. The paths are designed in a winding pattern, capitalizing on the landscape architecture theory of revealment/concealment to highlight various sculptures placed strategically throughout the garden. There are vistas in the formal garden whose axes are also terminated and highlighted by sculpture. Then there are the wooded, winding paths that are not axial and curve and turn, with surprising landscape views beyond each bend. The controlled and precise use of views and vistas is one of the most distinctive qualities of Burden's landscape designs, and can be experienced in a wide range of scales at Burden.

#### ***Constructed Water Features***

The ponds on the Burden Center property were created by Steele Burden to enhance the landscape experience. The two ponds to the south of the Burden Home are man-made water bodies, as is the pond to the far north of the property in the Barton Memorial

Arboretum. In addition to these larger scale water bodies, Burden strategically placed other smaller water features in the garden landscape. Whether or not these water bodies were also an attempt to replicate or replace water features lost when the artesian well and lakes dried up is not known, but does not seem to be the case.



**Figure 96: One of the several ponds designed and constructed.**

The old iron fountain centered within a planting of water lilies is sited just to the rear of the Burden Home in a circular garden, and is a good example of Burden's use of a sculptural feature combined with a water feature. Burden placed another water feature in the larger of the two formal gardens. It is a small basin on a pedestal surrounded by plantings with a cherub on top.

#### ***Small Scale Features***

Steele Burden traveled all over the world as a young man, collecting various objects and artifacts as he roamed the continents and rural Louisiana; however, he seemed to be most fascinated with sculpture. He brought home countless pieces to be placed in the gardens and

around the Rural Life Museum itself. Each statue is unique, some made of iron, others of concrete, and various other stones and metals.

Burden used these pieces in his garden design, which has resulted in a truly unique composition. Some of the statues serve as the termination of an axis, others might appear from around a corner, and still others are used as a central focal point, such as the fountain behind the Burden home.



**Figure 97: Garden tools.**

#### *Summary of character-defining features*

Not all of these features are equally important. In order for the inventory to be useful in the analysis of significance, a critical evaluation must be made to determine which of the elements contribute most in creating the sense of place that is most positively associated with the Burden Center landscape. The following list is STA's evaluation of the most significant features in the landscape.

1. *Sequence*

The entry sequence by car sets the tone for the visitors' impression of Burden Center. As laid out by Steele Burden, it is a carefully orchestrated sequence in which the views are controlled by a road design composed of numerous bends, with the straight runs of road framed by alleés of various tree types, from single crape myrtles or live oaks, to groves of pine or cypress, to open stretches with agricultural fields on both sides. The result is a rhythm alternating between open space and compressed space.

2. *Spatial Proportion*

The proportions of the three-dimensional spaces established by the original roadway widths and the tree plantings alongside the road are critical to the creation of the dramatic entry and arrival experience.

3. *Landscape-dominant scene*

Though there are buildings placed randomly within the landscape along the roadway, the view of landscape is always dominant and of paramount importance.

4. *The picturesque or informal expression*

Although there are formal design devices at work (axes, arcs, cross-axes, formal garden rooms), the dominant expression is the language of the picturesque or informal design aesthetic.

5. *Small details*

Throughout the landscape are small details (bee-hives, sculptures, clusters of special plantings, sugar kettle fountains) that are important as cues to the meaning of a specific place in the landscape.

6. *Rural character*

The overriding character of the landscape experience throughout the property is that of a place that is rural. Once the visitor leaves Essen Lane, the feelings associated with urban life—traffic, speed, crowds, tension—should not be present.

## **Existing Conditions at Burden**

(insert overall 11 x 17 image here)

## **Existing Conditions in Windrush Gardens**

*Tracy Stakely Thesis on Windrush and Steele Burden, 1997*

In 1997, J. Tracy Stakely performed a detailed inventory and analysis of Windrush Gardens, creating a series of drawings in AutoCAD format that would serve as a baseline measurement for those gardens shortly after the 1995 death of their primary creator and caretaker – Steele Burden. Twelve years later in 2009, the firm of Suzanne Turner Associates resurveyed these areas using the Stakely drawings as a base plan, primarily noting items that are now missing some twelve years later, and also noting additions. These additions or omissions are printed in red. The timing of this survey, done in conjunction with this cultural landscape report, is very important considering the natural disaster that occurred in 2008 – Hurricane Gustav.

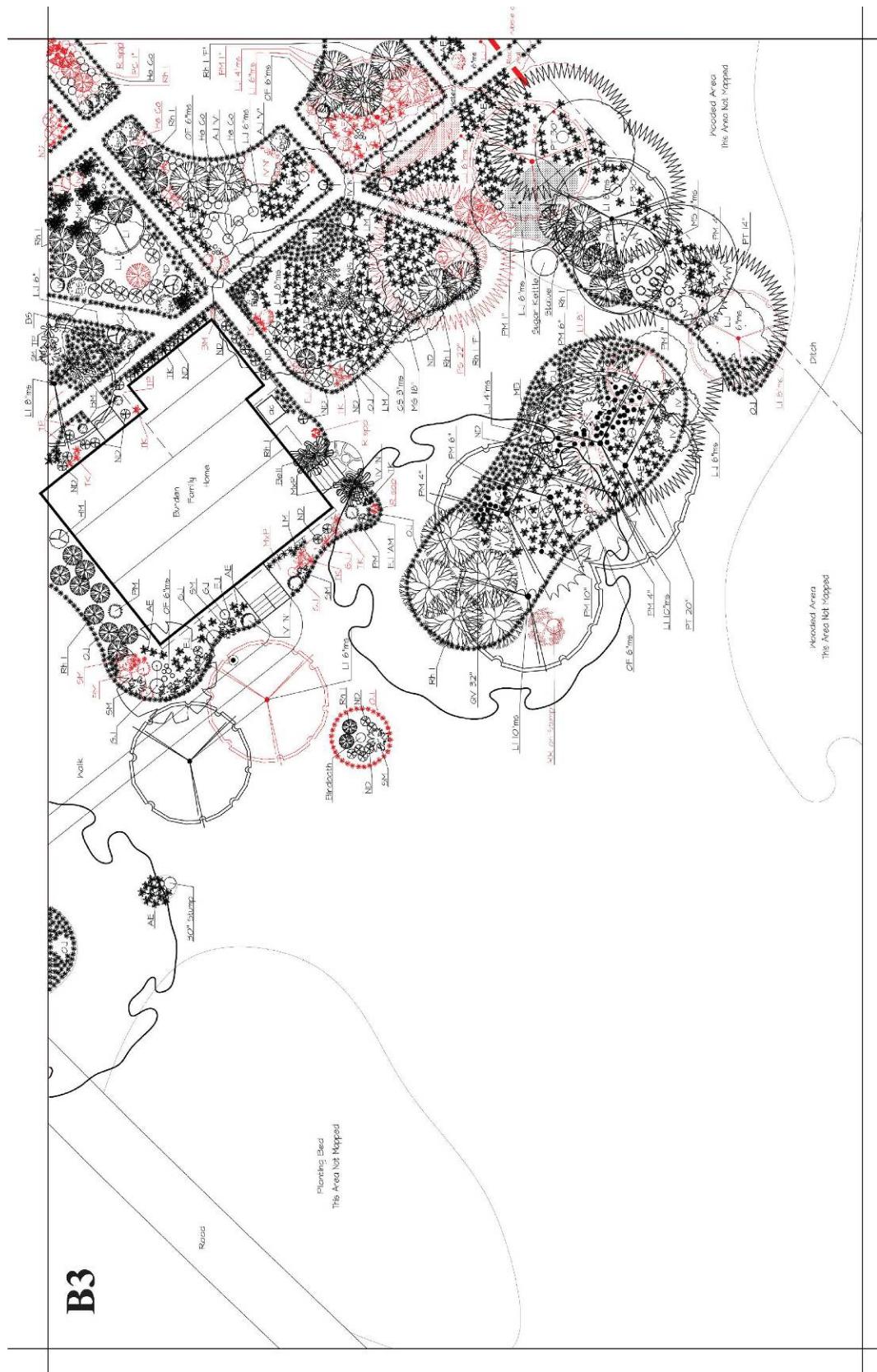
Following are the 1997 drawings with changes noted in red. It is easy to see that there have been significant changes in the tree canopy and in some plant communities due to attrition and recent hurricane damage.

## Key Plan



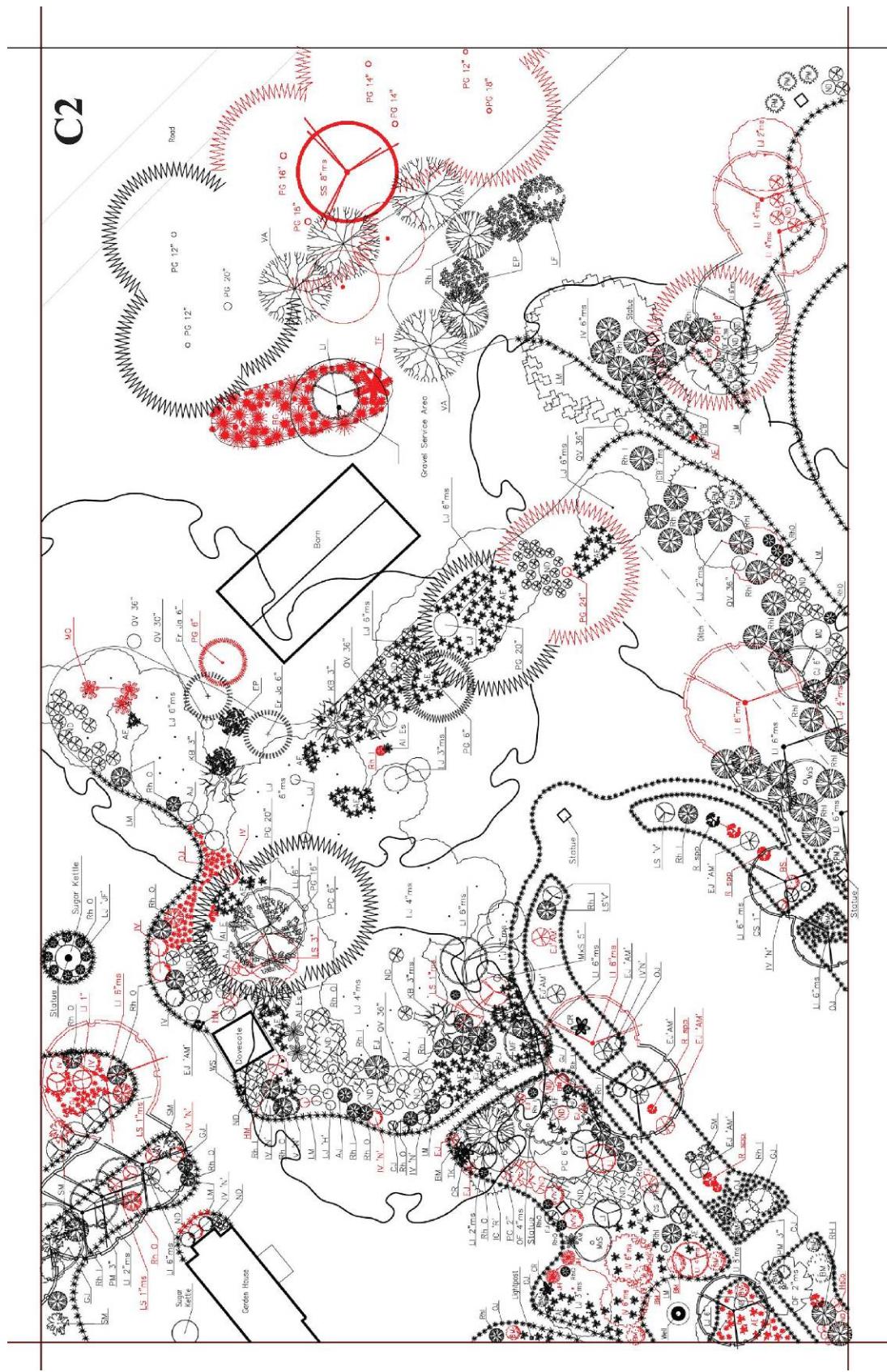
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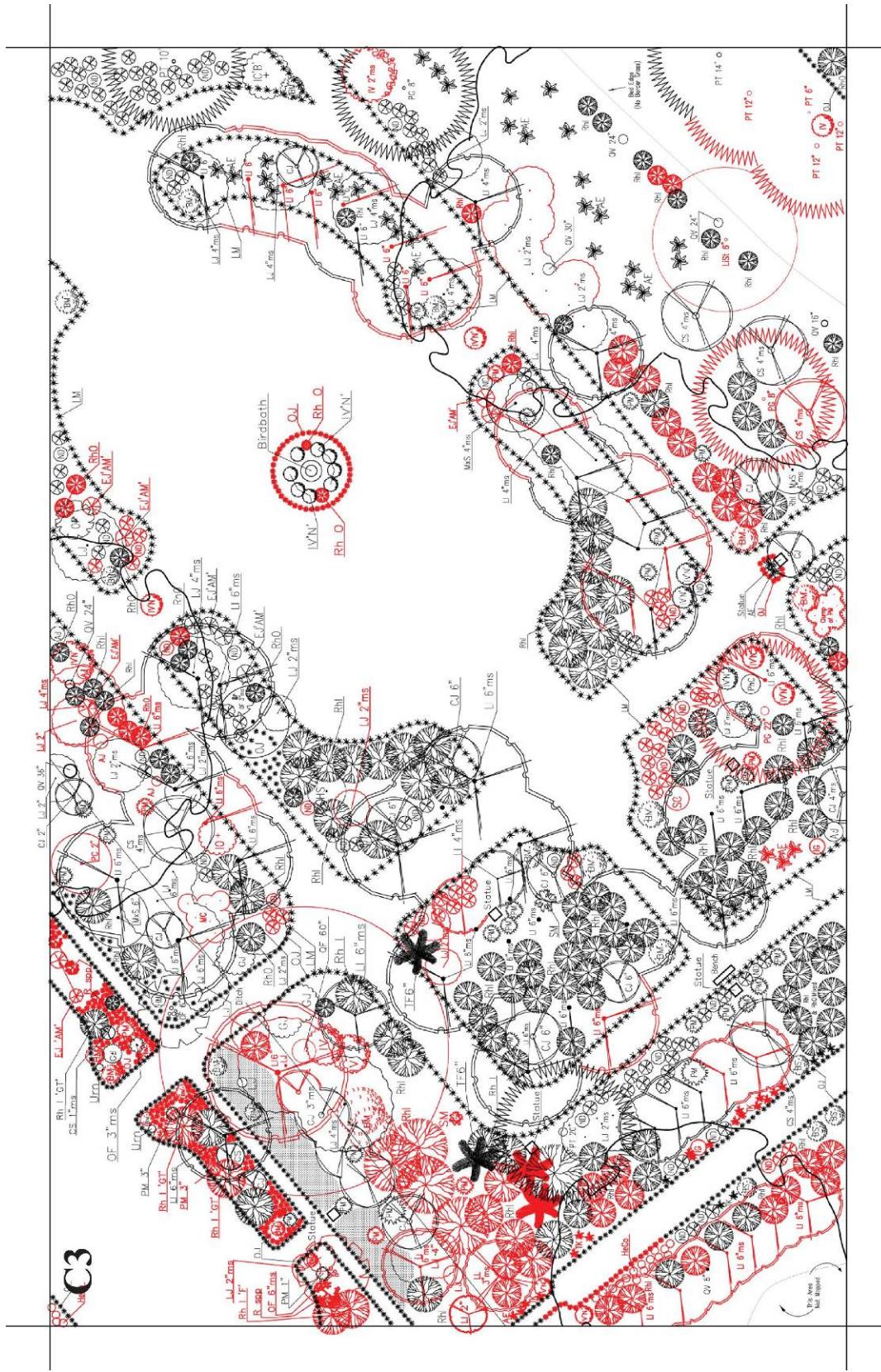


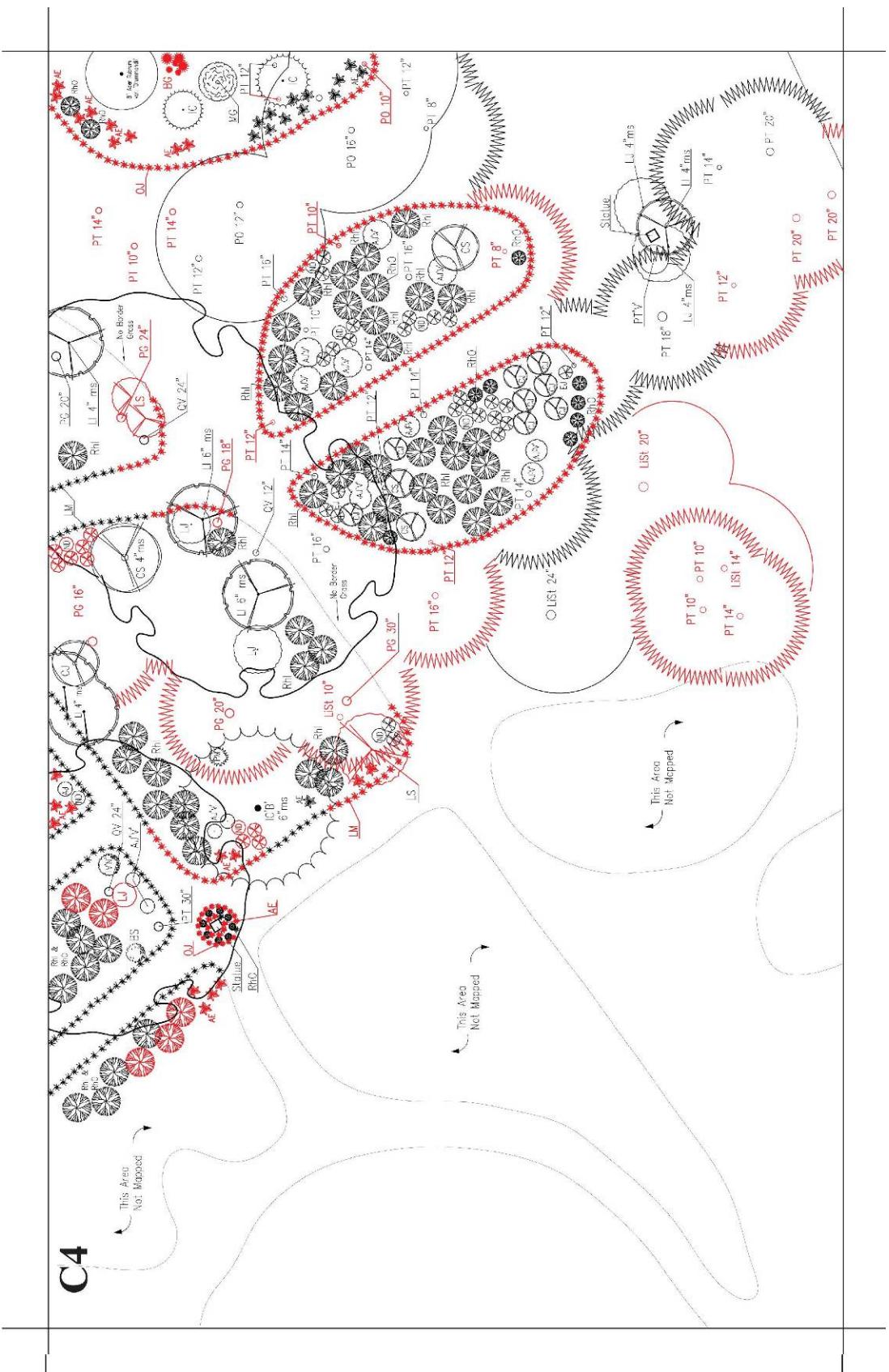




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D2

See Page 12  
For Paintings  
Around Pond

A detailed diagram of a stylized flower or seed head, possibly a magnified view of a stamen or pistil. The structure is composed of numerous small, circular elements arranged in a spiral pattern. Several points on this structure are labeled with text and symbols:

- PG 10°
- TD 3"
- PG 16"
- PG 14"
- PG 8"
- PG 8°
- PG 10"
- PG 14°
- TD 3"
- PG 16"
- PG 14"
- PG 14°
- PG 12°
- PG 12°
- PG 16"
- PG 16"

## FIVE: Contexts for Historical Analysis

### Context 1: The Geographical Setting

#### *Geologic origins*

Geologically, Baton Rouge is one of the more complicated landscapes in Louisiana, lying on a series of ecotones that are the result of the interplay between the ecology of the Mississippi River, the series of uplift escarpments bisecting the Baton Rouge area (primarily from east to west), and the series of tributary and distributary mostly relict water bodies that splay out across the area landscape.

First, the Mississippi River ecology: The natural levees of the Mississippi River are roughly twenty-five feet in height along the Baton Rouge waterfront. Prior to the construction of artificial levees on top of these natural levees, the river annually rose over the banks and backed up first into Capitol Lake north of the new Capitol (which was a natural tributary to the river), and the surrounding bayous. South of the capitol, the overflow first rose into Bayou Duplantier and then flowed through that connection to City Park lakes (former swamps) and southward (Sibley, 60).

Elevation of the lake surface is 24 feet today; elevation of the low water stage in dredged Bayou Duplantier adjacent to the City Park Lake dam is 12 feet. The Mississippi flood plain is 18 feet. The flood plain of the stretch that exists here still remains as a subterrace.... At a point about three and one-half miles southeast of here, Bayou Duplantier enters Dawson Creek. This is another stream which received headward incision (erosion) that resulted during reverse north-westward flow into the Mississippi River. However, there is no alluvially-filled deep valley similar to the one at City Park Lake. The flood plain surface of this stream forms a subterrace farther upstream where it is only partially destroyed by cutting. At a point about four miles southeast of here, Dawson Creek enters Ward's Creek, which also drains part of Baton Rouge, and was a distributary channel earlier. This stream enters Bayou Manchac about four miles southeast of this point. (Sibley, 62)

So, the City Park lakes were the first water body where water overflowed the natural levee along the Mississippi River, with water flowing through in an alluvial fashion, and then Dawson's Creek and Ward's Creek received backflow when there was particularly high water.

The second series of geologic features that are present in Baton Rouge are the series of prehistoric terraces and uplift terraces that transect the city generally from east to west. The alluvial floodplain is present where the river has incised the banks on the east side of Baton Rouge, most notably in the area south of the LSU Campus and further south. Running along Highland Road is the first terrace formed by the Pleistocene epoch, which resulted in the deposition of parent material from the interior of the continent, with an overlying strata of loess soils. The Burden complex lies at the back of this terrace on the downthrown side of the Baton Rouge fault.

Equally noticeable is the subsidence of land surface on the south (downthrown) side of the Baton Rouge Fault, particularly along the Interstate 12 Highway from City Park Lake to the North Fork of Ward's Creek. The Baton Rouge Fault escarpment ranges in height between 10 and 20 feet and extends from southern Baton Rouge at McKinley Street eastward, north of Interstate 12, paralleling it until turning southeast at the North Fork of Ward's Creek, then along the south side of Clay Cut Road 25 miles to Livingston Parish. The outstanding feature in the area is the escarpment reflecting the fault's presence. The fault scarp is the most fundamental and diagnostic landform produced by faulting. (Sibley, 66)

The Baton Rouge fault is an uplift escarpment caused by the "shifting" of land mass along the gulf coastal plain. As areas along the Gulf of Mexico subside and collapse, areas further inland lift in a corresponding fashion. These are not typical fault zones which result in violent movement, but rather in a series of rising and falling slumping movements, occurring over extended time periods. North of the Baton Rouge fault, there are a series of faults running through the parish, with the next one being the Denham Springs fault, the Alsen fault, and then the Zachary fault. Each of these faults results in an uplift terrace approximately ten to twenty feet above the previous terrace, with a downthrown drainage system at its base (Sibley, 65).

Other topographical features of the Baton Rouge land surface include the apparent slumps and poor drainage areas on the downthrown blocks of the faults in the Baton Rouge Fault Zone.

This is particularly noticeable on the northern and northeast side of the Ward's Creek flood plain and Clay Cut Bayou flood plain along Interstate Highway 10 and 12 between City Park Lake and Essen Lane, also on the south side of Jefferson Highway and Clay Cut Road. (Sibley, 80)

The Burden Complex lies at the back of the Pleistocene Terrace on the downward sloping side of the Baton Rouge fault, with Ward's Creek incising the terrace interior, then flowing to the south to join Bayou Manchac.

By virtue of its existence as part of the terrace and subterrace system, on the edge of a fault zone, and with a backflow distributary channel running along the southwest perimeter, Burden is a complicated geologic site, with a rich history related to the Mississippi River and prehistoric Pleistocene and uplift terraces, and now existing as a part of the larger drainage system of Baton Rouge in general, with its runoff flowing through Ward's Creek to Bayou Manchac, the Amite River, Lake Maurepas, Lake Pontchartrain, and ultimately the Gulf of Mexico.

While the Burden Complex historically did not receive alluvial deposits due to its distance from the river, it did flood on a frequent basis due to backwater flooding, and the resulting soil profile exhibits characteristics of this repeated flooding due to leaching. Leaching is the process whereby soluble minerals and humus are removed from the soil by water flowing down through the soil particles, resulting in a soil profile with little fertility and light color.

#### *Soils*

The soil of the Burden Complex is primarily of the Jeanerette Prairie soil profile. Soils are named after their first place of identification, so the name Jeanerette is used only because that is where this particular soil profile was first identified. Sibley states that these soils are “from loesslike material.... . These soils have been leached of carbonates, and they have an alkaline subsoil. (Sibley, 89)” As they are an aged soil and have been leached by high levels of rainfall and inundation, they are generally low in fertility and require considerable fertilization in order to support modern agriculture.

With the completion of the levee system between Baton Rouge and New Orleans by 1812, the relationship between the Mississippi River and Baton Rouge was forever changed, as spring flooding no longer inundated the lower reaches of the city, and what had been distributary outlets for the river now served merely as drainage ways for the City of Baton Rouge (Colten, 21). Today, Ward's Creek receives urban runoff from the surrounding neighborhoods and part of the Burden Complex, carrying it to deposition in Bayou Manchac.

## **Context 2: Social/Political Cultural Contexts**

Although Windrush Plantation's history as a land holding begins with previous owners as early as 1812, the development of Baton Rouge as a viable urban place began even earlier, and served as the backdrop against which Windrush Plantation and the Burden Center would evolve.

### *Three Flags over Baton Rouge; settlement well underway*

Baton Rouge was settled by the French as early as 1722, but early attempts failed, either because of disease or the lack of reinforcements and supplies from the Company of the Indies, the expedition's sponsor (Meyers, 16-20, *passim*). In 1763, Baton Rouge and West Florida, of which it was a part, became British territory as a result of the Treaty of Paris. At the time, the small village of Manchac was more important because Bayou Manchac was the southern boundary of West Florida, with Spanish Louisiana on the other side. The bayou was navigable, at least during the spring, and was heavily used for transport, including smuggling. Via the bayou, slaves were brought into the Baton Rouge area (Meyers, 24-25).

Beginning in 1767, the governor of West Florida was authorized to make grants of land ranging from fifty acres to five thousand acres to those who had fought in the French and Indian War (1754-1763). Along with the grants came the stipulation that a dwelling must be built, a percentage of arable land was to be cultivated, any swampy land was to be drained, and barren land would become pasture for cattle. Thus the settlement of the Baton Rouge area was stimulated (Meyers, 27-28), and the taming of the dense south Louisiana landscape was begun in earnest.

The Declaration of Independence then created a tenuous situation for the people of West Florida who were content as British citizens despite pressure to join the new nation. They enjoyed the British form of government that valued the rights of the individual, but geographically they were bounded by the Spanish, and coveted by the United States which sought to expand west. The value of West Florida's transportation resources made West Florida attractive to both Spain and the United States. By 1779 Spain had declared war on England, and the Battle of Baton Rouge that year was won by the Spanish led by Bernardo de

Galvez, who then led expeditions that captured Mobile and Pensacola. This signaled the end of British control of West Florida (Meyers, 39-41).

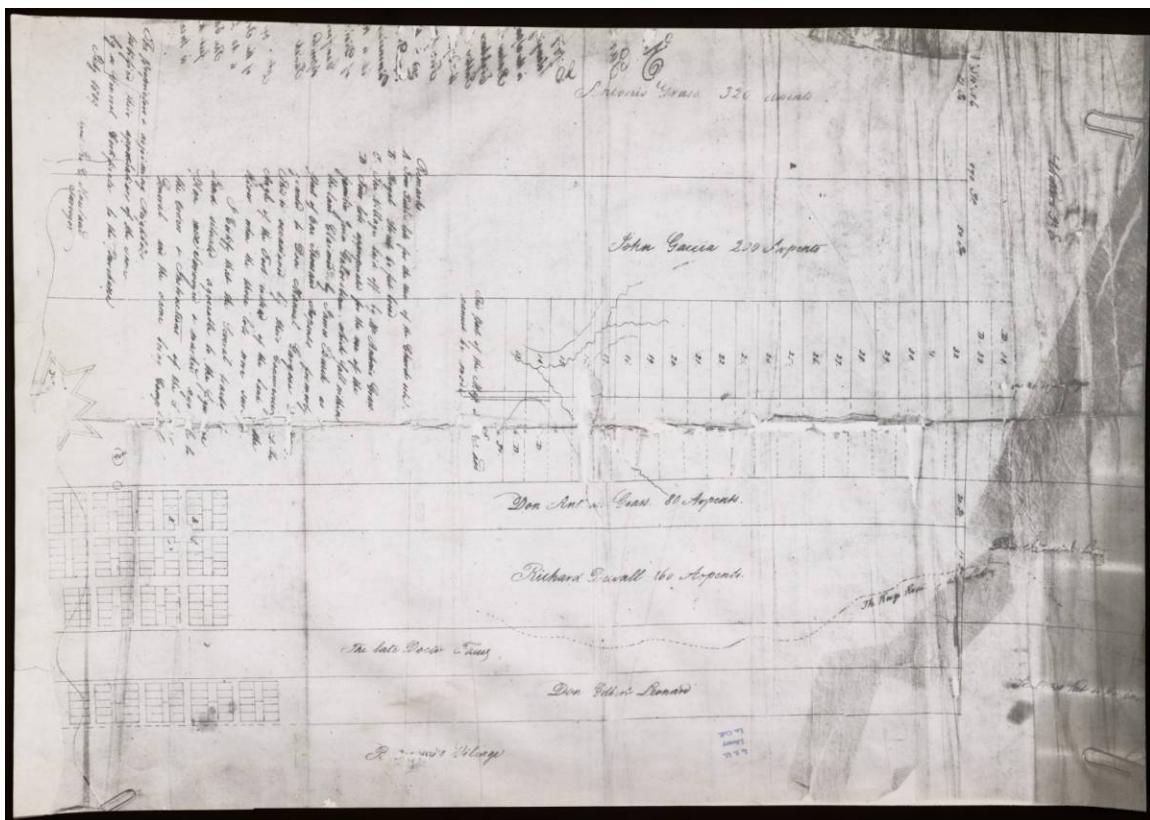
Spanish rule did not emphasize individual freedom as had the British, and it had very restrictive trading practices, which were neither profitable for the colonists nor for Spain. The Spanish legal system was cumbersome and most of the local residents did not speak Spanish, making communication a challenge. Despite these disadvantages, settlement in the Baton Rouge area began to prosper during the period of Spanish rule (1779-1810), and by the 1780s the district was, according to Baton Rouge historian Mark Carleton, a “small but flourishing plantation society” (22). One account of the early settlement, cited in the Works Progress Administration’s *Louisiana, A Guide to the State*, reports that “its business quarter, so far as it had one, was on the river bank and the bluff immediately above, while its straggling residences, frame and adobe, always with long galleries to the front, were scattered along shell roads leading out to the plantations” (Writers’ Program of the WPA, 251).

The town’s Mississippi River location, on high bluffs and not subject to the river’s devastating annual floods, gave Baton Rouge a strategic advantage over other river trading locations downstream. The alluvial soils meant that the land was well suited for agricultural production, so indigo, then cotton, and eventually sugar cane were planted on large land grants that relied upon the proximity of the river for their outlet to a national and international market. “The planters still led a relatively pleasant life. And the plantation economy provided money and leisure for important social gatherings for the more well to do.” Cotton and corn were the major crops (Meyers, 55). In 1794, although the fort in Baton Rouge needed repairs, it was still valued for its location, as Louisiana Governor Carondelet wrote to the Spanish king: “Baton Rouge offers the most beautiful and advantageous location to dominate the river and hold the enemy a sufficient time” (Meyers, 62-63).

Far beyond the southern city limits and any area of concentrated settlement lived a colony of Pennsylvania German farmers, called the “Dutch Highlanders,” who’d settled at Manchac in the 1770s, but had moved north to higher ground after the floods of 1784—along Highland Road, Bayou Fountain, and Ward’s Creek between Ben Hur Road and Siegen Lane. These ambitious farmers grew first indigo, then cotton in the 1780s, adding sugarcane

in the early 1830s. The major families of this group were the Kleinpeters, the Garigs, the Starings, and the Sharps (Carleton, 36-37).

By 1800, Baton Rouge had most of the major trades and professions represented among its residents, including civil and military personnel, doctors, lawyers, a priest, interpreter, merchants, surveyors, tailors, carpenters, masons, tanners, butchers, blacksmiths, bakers, and gunsmiths (Meyers, 57). After 1794, Canary Islanders settled on Spanish Town Road creating Spanish Town, the community's northern rim and the town's first neighborhood. It was also during this time that Elias Beauregard recognized that the land he owned near Baton Rouge was becoming more valuable; he had a surveyor develop a plan for a subdivision between North and South Boulevards, and East Boulevard and the river. Eleven or more of the lots were sold in 1807 (Meyers, 59). The area from First to Ninth Streets, including what are today Laurel, Main and Florida Streets became Devall Town.



**Figure 98: 1809 survey of Baton Rouge shows the fort and the Mississippi River on extreme left; the corners on the square marker "A" on the left grid are "Four public lots for the use of the Church site." This is the location of the present St. Joseph's Cathedral.**

### *Statehood, incorporation, and a flourishing plantation society*

The influx of Americans after the American Revolution began to concern Spanish authorities, for the Americans formed a kinship with the existing residents of British descent, all of whom sought a more representative form of government where Catholicism was not the only condoned religion. It became a matter of time before Spanish West Florida would be overcome by the expansionism of the Americans. The strategic and commercial value of the territory with control of the Mississippi River, and control of the Gulf of Mexico seaports of Mobile and Pensacola made it imperative for the new nation to gain control of the territory. On September 22, 1810, “a handful of men, with the moral support of Americans, unseated the power of Spain in West Florida” (Meyers, 95). By December, 1810, the Republic of West Florida was no more, and the territory became part of the United States of America, although the population was a mixture of Americans, French, English, and Spanish. In 1812, the state of Louisiana was admitted to the Union by the United States Congress (Meyers, 131-132), and in 1817, Baton Rouge was incorporated by the Louisiana legislature. Throughout the antebellum period, the young town enjoyed “the steadily increasing, if uneven, prosperity of a healthy American frontier community and Mississippi River port” (Carleton, 36). At the time of its incorporation, the city limits were from the river east to roughly the location of 22<sup>nd</sup> St., although actual settlement didn’t extend much beyond Fifth St.; and from Garcia’s Bayou (later Capitol Lake) to South Boulevard. Its principal subdivision, Beauregard Town, had been surveyed and marketed in 1806, but was only actualized after the Civil War, when the population began to expand in a southeasterly direction. By 1819, the population of Spanish Town had grown far more diverse as French and Anglo-American families moved into the neighborhood. By 1840 other districts of the town were Grass Town, Hickey, Duncan, Mather, and Leonard Town (Carleton, 36).

Despite the increased commerce and urbanization taking place along the river downtown, it was the production of a cash crop that dominated life in the city during the first half of the nineteenth century.

To antebellum Baton Rougeans, the Mississippi River, and the farms and plantations surrounding it, furnished the initial basis for economic security and growth. If local plantations such as Mount Hope or Magnolia Mound produced bountiful crops of cotton or sugarcane, and if market demand was strong, then Baton Rouge merchants and suppliers, whose stocks arrived on river boats, also thrived. Conversely, bad

harvests or glutted markets depressed the entire community. This interdependence of trade, river commerce, and agriculture continued to dominate Baton Rouge's economy throughout the nineteenth century and was still a significant factor until the third decade of the twentieth. (Carleton, 39)

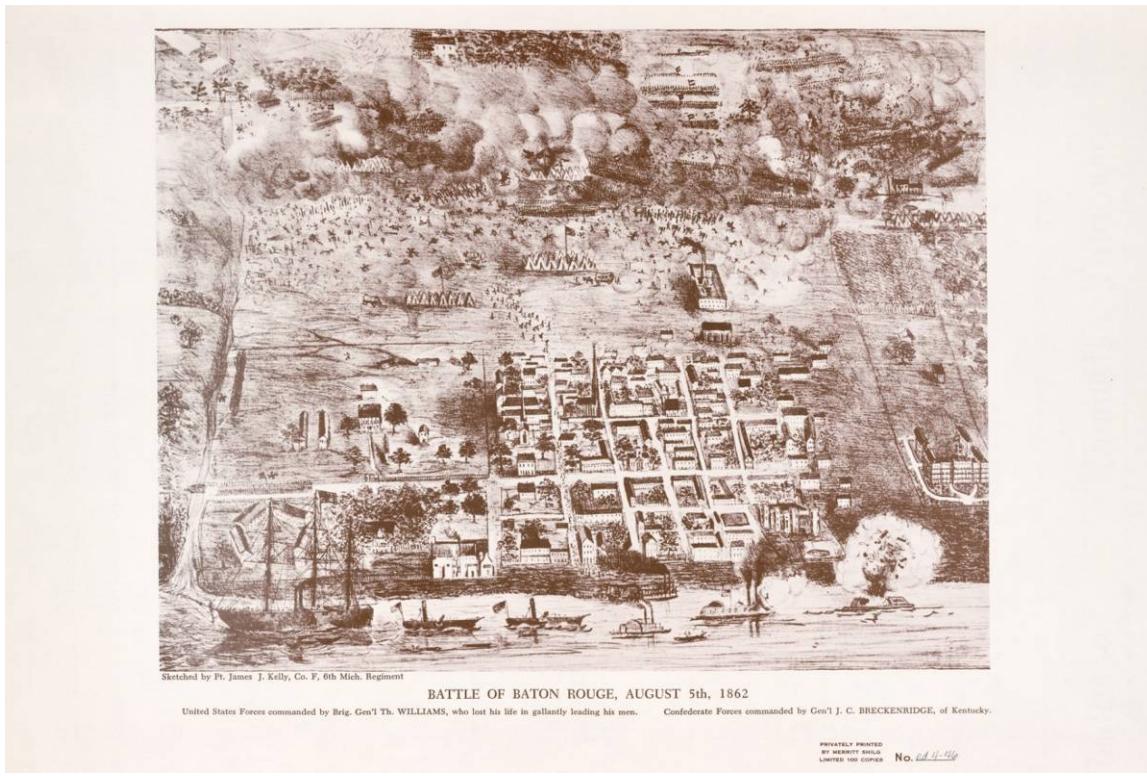
Although Carleton uses the two examples of plantations along Highland Road whose "big houses" have survived until the present day, it is important to know that this early road was not the only transportation artery along which plantations and farms were located during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Of course, the lots with river frontage would have been the most desirable and among the first surveyed, cleared, and granted, but there was also settlement down Clay Cut Road and other overland routes, such as Perkins and Essen Lane, and along the bayous that laced the interior of the area. In addition to plantation settlements where agriculture was made possible by the labor of enslaved populations, there were the smaller holdings of yeoman farmers who supported themselves and their families by raising cash crops using either hired laborers or family members. These were located throughout the rural areas surrounding the Baton Rouge city limits, and many of these farms were still in operation in the mid twentieth century. Often, the descendants of these early farmers, surrounded by encroaching suburbanization, sold their vegetables and fruits at seasonal roadside stands on their property. This is still the case in some rural parishes near Baton Rouge.

Although the success of annual crops was dependent upon the weather, it also depended upon the ability to easily transport the crop to market. According to the WPA guide, the coming of steamboats to river travel greatly improved interstate transportation, resulting in major trade with the upper Mississippi and Missouri Valleys (Writers' Program, 253). The first steamboat visit to Baton Rouge occurred in 1812; by 1822, the city was visited by 83 steamboats, 174 barges, and 441 flatboats bringing passengers and cargo (Carleton, 39). The river traffic created a need for more amenities like hotels, restaurants, schools, and churches. The growth and importance of Baton Rouge was eventually acknowledged by the decision of the legislature to make the city the capital of the state in 1846. This move brought additional population and seasonal commerce to the burgeoning town.

### *Civil War, Reconstruction, Municipal Improvements*

The Civil War interrupted the economic groundswell, however, and Baton Rouge was once again in the position of being coveted for its strategic river location. Louisiana joined the Confederacy in January, 1861, but Federal troops took control of the city in May, 1862, resulting in the frequent movement of Union gunboats up and down the river. On August 5, 1862, the Confederates attacked Union troops in Baton Rouge, hoping to regain control of the Mississippi River. The Battle of Baton Rouge was short. The Confederates were supposed to be joined by the gunboat Arkansas which failed to arrive at the appointed time, leaving Major General Breckenridge no choice but to withdraw to Ward's Creek, on the outskirts of town, to await the boat. He was eventually informed that the boat was disabled above Baton Rouge, and he retired his troops to the Comite River, essentially ending the battle in defeat (Writers' Program, 254).

Despite the short-lived duration of the battle, the city of Baton Rouge sustained a great deal of damage, with Federal troops downing many trees for barricades against the Confederates, and destruction of property in the area of combat, mostly near the National Cemetery just east of downtown. Civilians, terrified by the horror of the conflict, fled south along Highland and River Roads, pillaging farms and plantations along the way, so the damage was inflicted from both sides (Carleton, 91-93). One account cited by Carleton notes that Baton Rouge, "a once beautiful town, was left with its shade trees felled, its streets lined with debris, and over one-third of its houses burned or wrecked by the troops...." Once the Union had regained control of the city, the troops remained in occupation until the end of Reconstruction in 1877 (94).



**Figure 99: Although an artist's primitive sketch, the extent of impact of the battle is clear from the rendering. What is also evident is that the community was quite compact, with urban settlement limited to the first few blocks from the river. Beyond that was agricultural land, including plantations and small farms.**

At the onset of the war, because Baton Rouge was so vulnerable, the state government had been moved first to Opelousas, then to Alexandria, and in 1862 to Shreveport. The Capitol Building was gutted by fire in December 1862, and not rebuilt until 1880-82, when state government returned to the city (Writers' Program, 254).

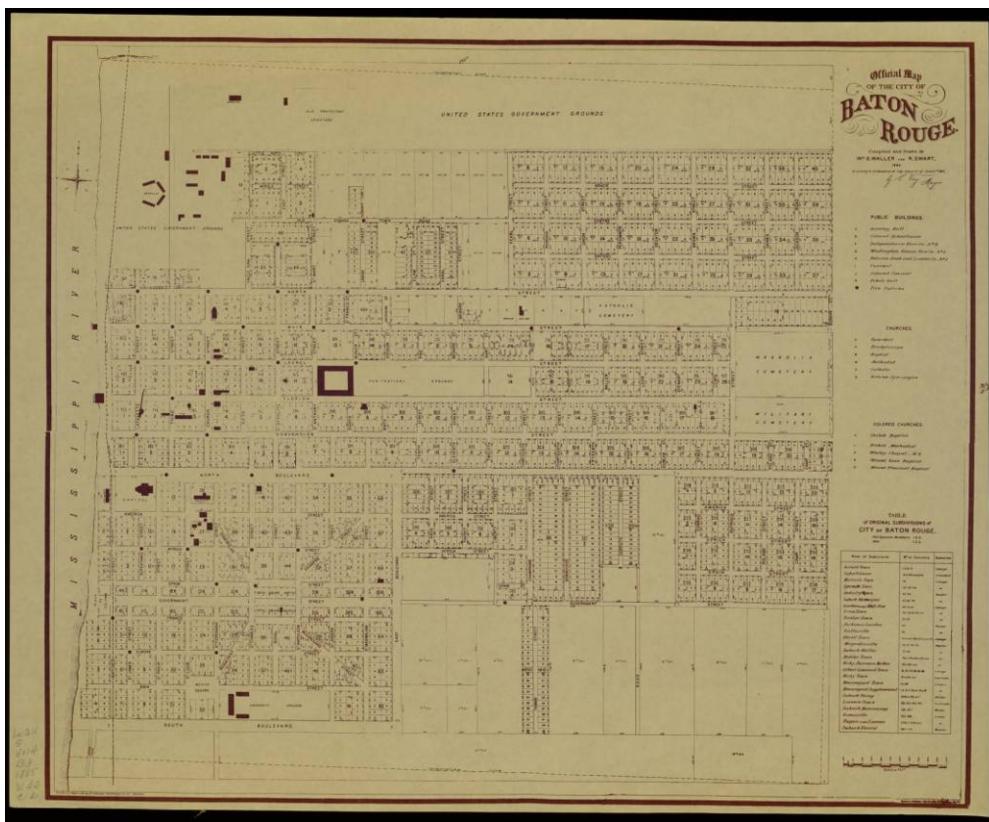
After the war, agriculture remained at the heart of the economy. But without a slave labor force, production and profits suffered significantly. Agriculture was not only the prevailing industry, but it also dominated most of the landscape beyond the urbanized core of town. As late as 1941, the *Louisiana State Guide* painted a picture of a landscape that was still largely rural and agrarian in character:

The agricultural area surrounding the city includes both sugar cane and cotton plantations. A third important crop is harvested in the rapidly enlarging strawberry belt. The plains, immediately north of town, are admirably adapted to stock raising and dairying, valuable contributors to the agricultural wealth of the district. (256)

In 1890, cotton production was such a vital part of the local economy that a new gin was opened on Florida Street, equipped with the Munger Improved Cotton Machine, and touted as the most complete gin in Louisiana (Carleton, 187). Of the 68 sugar cane growers and manufacturers in East Baton Rouge Parish in 1900, 44 of these had Baton Rouge as their mailing addresses, attesting to the amount of agriculture being practiced in the city at the turn of the century (Carleton, 139).

One of the major positive advances following the war was the establishment of Louisiana State University by legislative act in 1870, precipitated by the destruction by fire of the Pineville Seminary of Learning. In 1877 LSU absorbed the State Agricultural and Mechanical College of New Orleans, (Carleton, 105) bringing together the components that make up the present-day university. The first campus was north of downtown, on the current site of the State Capitol grounds, adjacent to Spanish Town.

As the city began to recover and expand, the pressures of increased urbanization produced sanitary conditions that made life in the city increasingly unhealthy. Unpaved streets made some routes impassable after heavy rains. Sewerage sometimes was present in drainage ditches that lined streets. Wells had to be dug deeper and deeper in order to reach potable drinking water, as the water table became contaminated by increased numbers of privies and backyard stables.



**Figure 100:** This “Official Map of the City of Baton Rouge, compiled and drawn by Waller and Swart in 1885 indicates the “Public Buildings, Churches, Colored Churches, and Original Subdivisions.”

As late as 1897, quarantine camps were being set up at major entrances to the city as a response to an outbreak of yellow fever. This was one of at least five different outbreaks during the second half of the nineteenth century. Finally, city fathers began to address the provision of municipal services that would provide a safer, cleaner urban environment. In 1887 the city council authorized the construction and operation of a waterworks for the city (Carleton, 130). In 1893, a municipal streetcar line encircled the city, and in 1899, new mayor Robert A. Hart joined together with a group of progressive citizens to approve bond issues that included paving city streets, drainage and sewerage projects, and the purchase of a site for a public hospital (Carleton, 132).

Once the need for a healthy environment had been addressed, it was incumbent upon city fathers to ensure that there were recreational opportunities for all Baton Rouge’s citizenry. Victory Park, located on the former site of the State Penitentiary on Florida Street, east of downtown, had served the city during its first phase of growth after the Civil War. In

1919, a bond issue was passed in the amount of \$100,000 to fund improvements to the park including “a pergola, flowerbeds, memorial fountain, fishpond, and bandstand... .” (Plan Baton Rouge, 2004).<sup>7</sup> This park was typical of American parks of the second half of the nineteenth century and later, which essentially provided pleasure grounds for passive recreation, strolling, and relaxing in a “natural” setting. New York’s Central Park, designed by Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted, began as this kind of park, albeit a much larger and more successful example of the type. As cities expanded and neighborhoods developed farther away from the urban center, neighborhood parks were needed to meet the requirements of residents. The parks were often designed as regional facilities, serving not only nearby pedestrians, but also those within an easy commute. City Park, located equidistant from the LSU campus and Roseland Terrace, an early suburb east of downtown along Government Street, was such a park.

These parks often included amenities such as golf courses, zoos, playgrounds, or civic buildings. The sport of golf had become popular during the last decades of the nineteenth century, but initially it was available only to the elite who played at private country club courses. Soon the public demanded equal access. The first American municipal park to include a public golf course was Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx, begun in 1895, where golf course designer Tom Bendelow expanded the course in 1899. It was this same Bendelow who was hired to design a 9-hole course for Baton Rouge’s new regional park, City Park, in the 1920s.

In 1924, American Park Builders, a group of landscape architects from Chicago, was hired by the city of Baton Rouge to oversee the development of City Park. This was the same firm who had designed the 1919 Victory Park improvements, as well as designing Roselawn Cemetery, and a small park near Reymond Avenue (Phillips, 50). This commitment of city

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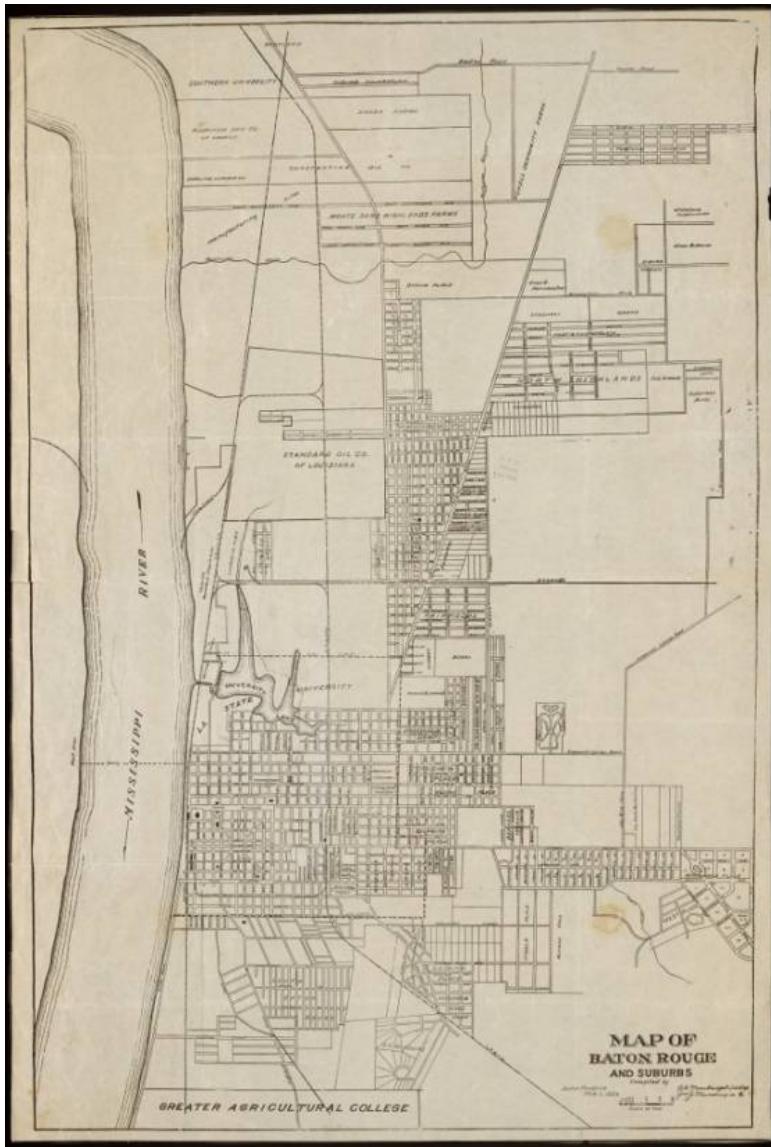
<sup>7</sup> Some years later a public pool and bathhouse was added to Victory Park, and then in the 1950s, the Baton Rouge Recreation and Parks Commission built a recreation center. At this time the eight-acre park was heavily used, with dances and concerts regularly scheduled. Acreage began to be carved away for other municipal uses, and the construction of I-110 in the 1960s occupied the eastern end of the park. By 1989 only 2.4 acres remained in the park, and BREC relinquished the remaining land for the construction of a new Federal Court House and parking lot (Plan Baton Rouge 2004).

resources related to the increased migration of population eastward, and the addition of this park spurred this trend.

*Baton Rouge enters the modern age, Standard Oil, a new LSU campus, and Governor Huey Long give the Depression a different face locally*

Another major improvement for the city and the region was the coming of the railroad, beginning with a New Orleans to Baton Rouge connection in 1883. This enhanced port operations, making it an excellent distribution center. The combination of both rail and water transport, together with a strong labor supply, created opportune conditions for industry to locate in the capital city. The alignment of these circumstances, as well as the municipal improvements that had brought Baton Rouge into the “modern” era, joined to attract an industry that would be a major player in the city’s landscape for the foreseeable future. In 1909, John D. Rockefeller’s Standard Oil of New Jersey made the decision to locate a major refining complex north of downtown Baton Rouge. According to Carleton, the amount of capital that the construction wages of the refinery brought into the city’s economy in 1909 amounted to two-thirds of the monetary value of the parish’s cotton crop for the year (156-7).

The onset of the First World War brought about even more production for Standard Oil. The petrochemical plant sparked the development of subdivisions near the facility, along Plank Road and Scenic Highway that provided modest single-family homes for the families of refinery workers.



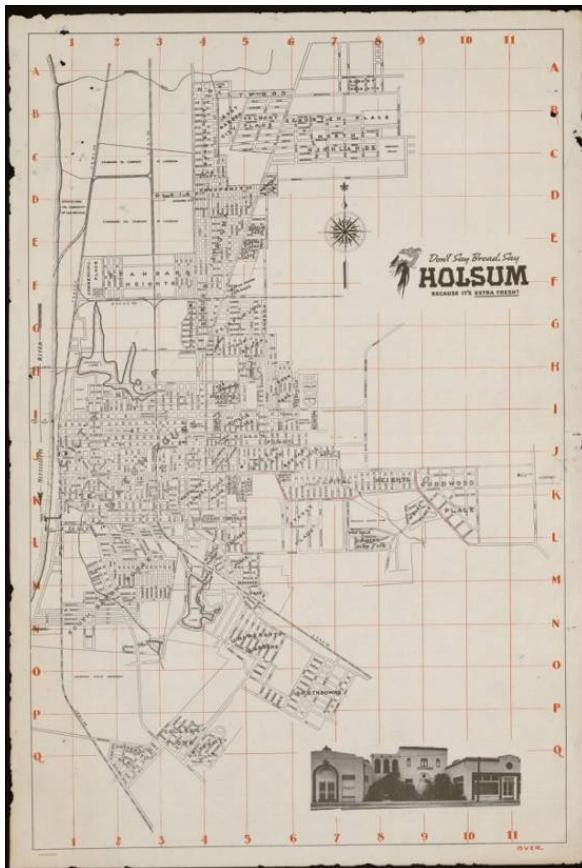
**Figure 101: Standard Oil located on the northern portion of the city, but large farms can still be seen surrounding the urbanized portions of Baton Rouge in all directions.**

After World War I, while the rest of the nation's economy collapsed after the Stock Market crash of 1929 and the onset of the Great Depression, Baton Rouge rode out the economic slump with the help of the petrochemical industry's boost to the local economy. The great Mississippi Flood of 1927 hit the city hard, but not like it did the lower-lying areas along the river that were decimated by the onset of unprecedented high waters. Because of the topographic height of the city, it became a place of refuge and support more than one of disaster, but the event was certainly disruptive for all who lived anywhere near the river.

The factor that added a degree of uncertainty to the city and state's economic and political future during the period was the arrival of Huey Long on the horizon. Hailing from rural Winn Parish with little formal education, Long catapulted himself into a position of leadership of the state's rural and uneducated population, and he set himself up as the enemy of big business, particularly Standard Oil. From his election as governor in 1928 until his assassination in 1935, Long transformed the landscape of the state, both physical and psychological, paving roads, building the tallest state capitol building in the nation, building public schools and state hospitals, and ensuring that the new campus of Louisiana State University – which had been officially dedicated in 1926, prior to his election – was among the finest in the nation and available to all qualified students without regard to their ability to pay (Carleton, 164-166). When the relief programs of the New Deal became available to unemployed citizens of the state in 1933, Long was able to funnel these jobs and federal and state dollars to the projects that he wanted built—among these the construction of sidewalks on the campuses of LSU and Southern University, road construction and repair, and the expansion of City Park Lake (Carleton, 171).

The decision to move LSU had been set into motion long before Long came onto the scene. LSU president Thomas Boyd had lobbied for a more spacious campus where LSU could become a great agricultural college. In 1918 Gartness Plantation, south of Baton Rouge, as well as portions of Arlington and Nestledown Plantations, totaling 2,130 acres, were purchased for a new campus where this stronger agricultural school could become an integral part of LSU (Ruffin, 47-49). Ground was broken for the new campus in 1922, with the first building a 13,000 square foot dairy barn. Architect Theodore Link was hired to design the campus buildings, with the engineering, agricultural, administrative, classroom, and library buildings completed by 1923, the Campanile in late 1923, and Coates and Foster Halls in 1924 (Ruffin, 52). The stadium was completed in 1924, and the Greek Theater in 1926. Students attended classes on the new campus during the 1925-26 year, although they still lived on the old campus. The campus was situated "two miles out in the country," on former sugar cane fields, with no trees yet (Ruffin, 54). Once LSU had vacated the downtown campus, the site became available for redevelopment, and was earmarked for Long's new State Capitol Building.

During this period, the reputation of the state's highest leadership was sullied, not only by a failed attempt to impeach Long in 1929, but by the sudden resignation of his successor Richard W. Leche, who turned out to be breaking federal laws, as had Long. Leche was not as fortunate as Long in avoiding impeachment, and ended up in the Atlanta Federal penitentiary. At the same time, LSU's president James Monroe Smith was convicted of embezzlement and sent to the state penitentiary at Angola. Thus the state's reputation for corrupt politics was well publicized around the country, something that has plagued Louisiana up until the present day. Despite this, major physical improvements had been accomplished, although the sources of funding were often questionable and the motives not always noble or humanitarian. And all of this "progress" had taken place during a time when most of the nation was struggling to survive.



**Figure 102:** In this plan from 1930, Standard Heights subdivision has begun to fill in to the south of Standard Oil, and increased suburbanization to the south of the Louisiana State University campus has begun to occur, although University Hills and Southdowns are the limits of development. City Park and its lake now appear as significant municipal spaces in South Baton Rouge. The following year, the State Capitol would appear near the lake near Section H2.

### *Federal relief programs, cultural tourism, and historic preservation*

During the Great Depression, a positive effect of relief efforts was that the federal government focused attention and funds on those parts of the American landscape that were important to national and regional heritage. Part of the motivation was to generate projects that would employ some of the most difficult-to-employ professionals during an economic downturn—artists, writers, and designers. Architects and surveyors, through the Historic American Building Survey (HABS), begun in 1933, travelled each state photographing, measuring and recording significant buildings, and sometimes gardens. Writers wrote travel guides for each state, providing information to lure Americans to “see America first,” and to see the parts of the states that really had enduring meaning, not just entertainment value. This was the beginning of American cultural tourism, and with most Americans unable to vacation far from home, they began to see things about their home and nearby states that they had never seen before.

The awareness that was raised by the WPA and by the fact that so many historic properties were coming under threat because their owners no longer had the funds to care for them was a huge boon for the nascent movement of historic preservation. Whereas Europeans had been ardent preservationists for centuries, the “young” American country had been so intent on conquest and expansion that the national psyche had not stopped to reflect on its past and recognize that the relics of even the recent past were, indeed, historic, significant, and threatened by the forces of nature and our own culture.

Of course, Americans had long protected the shrines and individual sites associated with political heroes, and the Mount Vernon Ladies Association of the Union is usually cited as the first American preservation group, founded in 1853. But in 1926, one of the first major moves to recognize the significance of the *ordinary* environments of the past—the vernacular landscape and the buildings of everyday people—took place when a pastor named Dr. Goodwin in Williamsburg, Virginia, enlisted the support of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to restore the colonial capital of Virginia. This project captured the imagination of people nation-wide, because they were able to walk down the streets of the restored town and see people in period costumes doing the daily tasks that would have been done at the time, tending the gardens as people would have done, with period outbuildings, fences, and

animals creating the scene of the eighteenth century landscape. This recognition of the role of the historic and cultural landscape as the connective tissue that essentially gives the preservation effort integrity was a major stride in preservation thinking, and would make an impact on the movement that followed.

The preservation of Colonial Williamsburg was soon followed by a concept known as the *historic district*, whereby a collection of historic buildings and the spaces in between them and around them are preserved not as museum properties, but as parts of actual living neighborhoods in urban places. Charleston, SC, (1931), New Orleans, LA, (1937), and Savannah, GA, were some of the first cities to establish such districts by local ordinance, with regulations that protected their historic fabric from demolition and inappropriate changes. Unfortunately, residents of Baton Rouge's historic neighborhoods did not recognize the value of their neighborhoods early enough to take steps to prevent the destruction of the housing stock, resulting in the loss of huge percentages of the structures in both Spanish Town and Beauregard Town.

Although New Orleanians and other Louisianans – including Weeks Hall's restoration of his ancestral home Shadows-on-the-Teché in New Iberia during the 1920s, (landscape refinements performed in a collaborative arrangement between Hall and Steele Burden) – had been on the vanguard of the American preservation movement since its inception, Baton Rouge has been consistently slow to respond to national trends in the movement. Whereas most communities had preservation or historic societies from the 1920s onward, the Foundation for Historical Louisiana was only founded in 1963. Whereas most groups like this have been able to halt the proposed demolition of city landmarks when there is an outcry from the citizenry, such an effort to stop the demolition of the Paramount Theater, under the Foundation's leadership, failed. New Orleans, on the other hand, was able to stop the construction in the 1960s of an interstate highway that would have run along the riverfront directly through the French Quarter.

#### *Civil Rights Movement and the suburbanization of Baton Rouge*

After World War II, the GI bill swelled enrollment at LSU, and triggered the development of neighborhoods south of the campus along Highland Road, as well as to the

east of the campus down Perkins Road, in what is today the Southdowns area. From this point on, the trend of development eastward has been constant. The prosperity that followed the war meant that the state of Louisiana was transformed from one with a primarily rural population base to an urban majority (54.3%) between 1940 and 1950.

Despite the prosperity of the community at large, the plight of the African-American population of southern states, including Louisiana, was characterized by segregation—separate schools, restrooms, places to sit on public buses, and a lack of voting rights. This disenfranchisement finally became intolerable, blacks organized nationally and locally, and Baton Rouge had strong leadership in its African-American community. Baton Rouge was the site of the first bus boycott of the civil rights movement (1953), which, in turn, served as the model for the more well-known Montgomery Bus Boycott. Lasting eight days, the boycott was important to local residents who became actively involved in the national movement. Student sit-ins reached Baton Rouge in 1960 when Southern University students were arrested for sitting-in at the Kress lunch counter. The next day the sit-in moved to the Greyhound bus terminal, and the following day, more than 3,000 students marched to the state capitol in protest of segregation and the arrests. In 1961, protestors called for a consumer boycott of downtown retailers in early December. Fourteen picketers were arrested and jailed for a month. Another student rally took place with police using tear gas and dogs, and more than 50 were arrested. In January 1962, a Federal Judge issued an injunction banning all forms of protest at Southern University, meaning that civil rights activity was effectively suppressed ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Baton\\_Rouge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Baton_Rouge)). The boycott and marches downtown sounded the death knell for Third Street as a retail center, and businesses and residents left downtown for suburban locations. The construction of Bon Marche Mall in 1960, followed by the development of Cortana Mall in 1978, both on Florida Street, east of the central city, contributed to the continuing decline of downtown as the city's retail center.

#### *Interstate highways connect suburban centers*

Beginning in the 1960s, federal dollars poured into highway construction and inner city “renewal.” In Baton Rouge, plans for Interstate 110 connecting the metro airport to

Interstate 10 south of downtown were unveiled. Construction of the elevated highway was begun in 1961 and completed in 1984. This roadway split the residential neighborhoods near downtown, making the housing stock east of the highway less valuable than the rest, and isolating this area from the rest of the neighborhood. This triggered a slow but steady decline in the social fabric of these inner city neighborhoods. In the late 1960s plans were underway for the extension of Interstate 10 southeast toward the College, Essen Lane, and Siegen areas. Eventually interchanges were added between College and Essen connecting I-10 and I-12, which facilitated the residential and commercial growth that this part of the parish experienced.

By the time the first donation of Burden land to LSU was made in 1966, it was clear to Ione and Steele Burden that their home place had become far more strategically located than their ancestors could have ever dreamed, and that its future would need to be carefully planned in order for the landscape that they had stewarded throughout their lifetimes to survive intact.

### **Context 3: The Land Grant and Agricultural and Mechanical College Movement in America**

In the early days of the United States, those with financial resources sent their children to the Eastern Seaboard or hired tutors to come and live at their plantations and estates. A congressman by the name of Justin Smith Morrill determined that an egalitarian society, made up of yeoman landowners, in a country where agriculture was the chief form of industry, needed a more “functional” and widely available form of higher education. It was through his efforts that the Morrill Land-Grant Act was signed into law on July 2, 1862 by Abraham Lincoln (Ruffin, 19). Only the GI Bill of 1944 has had an equivalent impact on higher education in the United States.

Morrill did not develop the idea for his far reaching legislation within a vacuum. As far back as 1855, Michigan and Pennsylvania established universities whose ideas were predicated on the education of the common man from the industrial and agricultural industries.

The development of land grant colleges, whose emphasis was on agriculture, science, and engineering dates to February 12, 1855, when the state of Michigan established the Agricultural College of the State of Michigan, later Michigan State University. Pennsylvania soon followed on February 22, 1855, when it established The Farmers' High School of Pennsylvania, which later became Pennsylvania State University. These schools were the model for the 1862 Morrill Act, which was a federal law establishing land grant colleges nationwide. This act was a direct "response to the industrial revolution and changing social class rather than higher education's historic core of classical studies" ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land-grant\\_university](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land-grant_university), accessed 7/19/2010).

With the passage of the Morrill Act, Kansas State University was the first institution of this type, chartered on February 16, 1863. These land grants would form the core of a new type of educational institution that spread throughout the United States, and furthered the democratic ideals first promulgated by Thomas Jefferson, when he distributed federal lands to citizens in order to populate and capitalize on the acquisition of lands from Native-American tribes throughout the expanding country.

Landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted contributed to the development of American attitudes on campus planning, although there has been scant study of his contributions. Involved in the design of at least twenty schools during his career from the 1860s to the 1890s, he was particularly interested in the design of land-grant colleges (Turner, 140). In making plans for the campus of Berkeley in 1866, Olmsted wrote that a college should not be a separate entity, but instead an integral part of a community that promoted a beneficial environment for the students. Colleges, he argues, should be located neither in the country, nor in the middle of the city, with its many distractions, but rather in a planned suburb that integrated domestic life and nature (Turner, 141). Olmsted argued for campus plans that were village-like rather than formal, and he eschewed quadrangles with their symmetry in favor of informal and picturesque groups of building in park-like settings (Turner, 142-150, *passim*). Campus planning scholar Paul Venable Turner suggests that Olmsted's preference of "an informal design was inherently appropriate to a land-grant institution as an expression of modest rural values, in contrast to the elitism and formality of the traditional colleges. Olmsted's park-like campus provided a tangible symbol for the new liberal and democratic ideals of education" (150).

Into this milieu of higher education activity occurring throughout the United States, Louisiana had begun the process of establishing universities and colleges to educate the general public in 1845. Chartered that year, the University of Louisiana was located in New Orleans on the corner of Baronne and Common Streets, in the American Sector – now the Central Business District. With the passage of the Morrill Act, Louisiana in 1871 finally received an appropriation to establish Louisiana Agricultural and Mechanical College. Funding was provided by the issuance of 1,312 “scrip” by the federal government, each exchangeable for 160 acres of public lands in other territories or states. By legislative act signed into law on April 7, 1874, The Louisiana State Agricultural & Mechanical College was created and coexisted with the University of Louisiana at the same location on the corner of Common and Baronne Streets (Ruffin, 25). During this same period of time, Louisiana State University was established as a seminary, also housed at the same location. So in effect, there were three different institutions chartered at three different times: the University of Louisiana, which specialized in medicine and law; Louisiana State University, which specialized in theological studies; and Louisiana State Agricultural and Mechanical College, which taught engineering and agriculture.

Over time, Louisiana State University absorbed Louisiana State A&M College, and the name was changed to Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College. It was decided that a more agrarian, rural campus was needed to further the educational and research goals of the combined institution, and in 1884, LSU received title to the Pentagon Barracks and surrounding acreage in Baton Rouge and moved the combined institutions to the State Capital.

The new campus, in contrast to the crowded facility it replaced, contained slightly over 200 acres. It stretched from the river eastward to [present day] Plank Road, encompassing enough land for an on-campus horticultural garden and an experimental farm. (Ruffin, 34)

“The mission of the land-grant universities was expanded by the Hatch Act of 1887, which provided federal funds to states to establish a series of agricultural experiment stations under the direction of each state’s land-grant college, as well as [to] pass along new information, especially in the areas of soil minerals and plant growth” (Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hatch\\_Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hatch_Act), accessed 12/01/2010). It is under the aegis of the

Hatch Act that Louisiana State University began experiments at Burden Plantation in the mid 1920s.

Over the decades, LSU and A&M College continued to grow and administrators determined that the original downtown location was no longer adequate. In 1918, the Gartness Plantation came on the market just south of Baton Rouge. Thomas Boyd, then president of the University, approached Governor Ruffin G. Pleasant, who threw his support behind the effort to obtain the plantation and move the physical plant of the university to a new location on Highland Road south of the city. Unfortunately, the legislature was not in session, so in order to obtain the land and ensure its availability for the eventual move of the campus, the current dean created a coalition of citizens who facilitated the purchase.

William R. Dodson, and seven Baton Rouge business leaders—Robert A. Hart, David M. Reymond, J. Allen Dougherty; Sabin J. Gianelloni, Ollie B. Steele, J. H. Rubenstein, and Benjamin B. Taylor—assumed the risk, exercised the option, and jointly purchased the plantation. (Ruffin, 47-48)

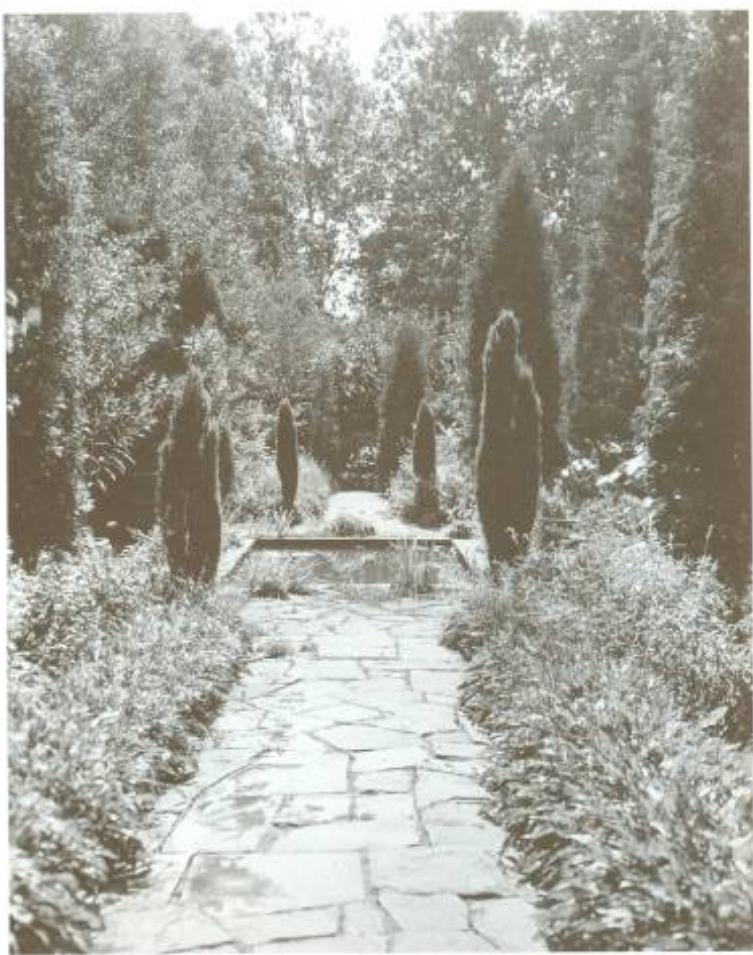
When the state appropriated the funds that same summer, the investor group transferred ownership of the Gartness Plantation property over to the university at the same price, and the new campus for LSU was now in hand. This is especially relevant in light of the fact that Ollie B. Steele was one of the eight signatories for the purchase of the current campus acreage, an interest in the University that continued on through his daughter and then through his grandchildren.

#### **Context 4: Southern antebellum revival gardens**

Although oral history recounts that it was Steele Burden and his mother, Miss Ollie, who together began to design the gardens that surrounded the Burden House or the Windrush summer house in 1921, when the family made their permanent residence “the country,” it was clearly the young Burden who was to give form and substance to the larger composition that is today known as Windrush Gardens.

The garden shown in the historic photographs of Pike and Jeannette Burden’s first home place, discussed in the photographic analysis section, is very much what we might associate with a “cottage garden” of the Victorian era—small planting beds, with some exotic

and spiky plants, as well as vertical trees for accent, a small pond with water spout, an arbor with vines, garden furniture on the edges of a garden space that is not very well defined or shaded, and peacocks strolling among the other garden ornaments. This garden seems very typical of the late Victorian era, with features similar to those of some of the East Coast gardens shown in these illustrations.



Pool, Whistler garden, 1919. Photo Parade Studio, 1920s, RMC, Cornell Univ. Library

**Figure 103: Gardens by Ellen Shipman, landscape architect. Pool, White estate, Ohio, 1920s, left image.**



Parterre garden and pergola, Tucker garden, 1926. Photo Mattie Edwards Hewitt, 1927.  
RMC-Cornell Univ. Library

**Figure 104: Gardens by Ellen Shipman, landscape architect. Parterre and pergola, Tucker garden, Mt. Kisco, N.Y., 1926.**



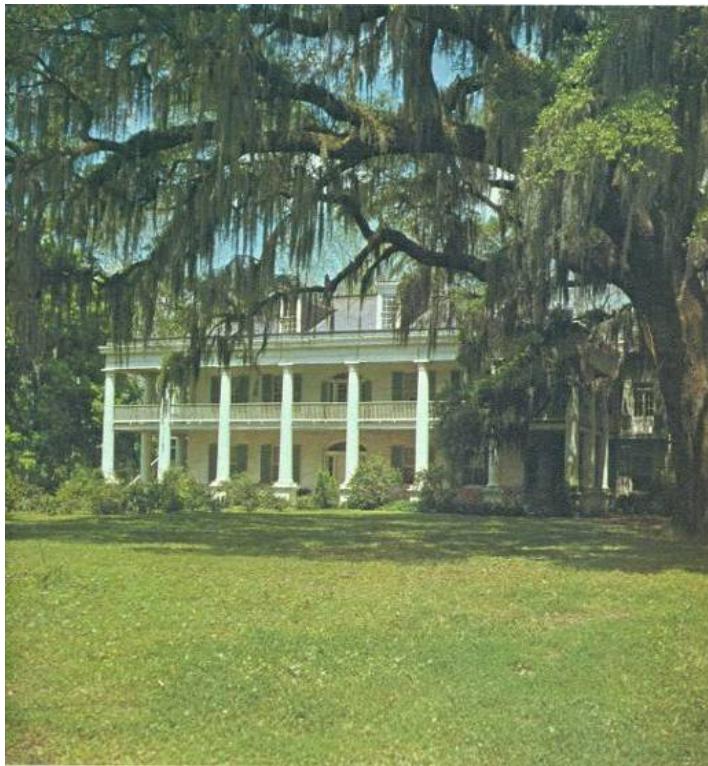
**Figure 105: Pergola, Anerum House, Delhi, N.Y., 1932-33, Fletcher Steele, landscape architect.**

Windrush Gardens, however, although just across the lane, seems a different kind of garden entirely. Perhaps this is because not many images from the same period exist with which to make a contemporaneous evaluation. But in comparing the two, it seems that there is a different kind of scale and plant vocabulary at work, and that the resultant gardens are markedly different.

One can only speculate on the sources that inspired Windrush Gardens. Burden traveled to South America and Europe, saw many gardens, became enamored with garden sculpture, and collected many pieces that today grace the garden rooms of Windrush. Burden had seen much of the landscape of south Louisiana, and must have been drawn to plantation landscapes at an early age. As a young man he worked in the garden at The Cottage on River Road, and before he installed a new garden for Frances Parkinson Keyes there, he probably had the opportunity to observe what remained of the original gardens. The Conrads of The Cottage were successful planters of the antebellum period, and would not have built such a high-style house without embellishing it with an appropriate garden. Correspondence between the Conrads and their relative Mary Clara Conrad Weeks of Shadows-on-the-Teché indicates the importance of gardening to both families, as they compared notes on their respective gardening practices. While documentation doesn't exist to indicate what survived from the antebellum garden, there must have been vestiges of its outlines and descendants of its original plants when Burden began to work there. Unfortunately, The Cottage was destroyed in a tragic fire in 1960, the surrounding landscape was abandoned, removed, and converted to pasture, so nothing survives of Burden's gardens there.



**Figure 106: The Cottage (Conrad Place), below Baton Rouge, built 1825. Before (1928) restoration.**



**Figure 107: The Cottage (Conrad Place), below Baton Rouge, built 1825. After (1928) restoration.**



**Figure 108: Side garden at the Shadows-on-the-Teche, New Iberia, LA., c. 1920s, designed by Weeks Hall around the remains of his grandmother's garden and her camellias.**

This situation was repeated in the many other plantation sites that Burden visited, whether he worked in the gardens or simply was visiting them. Burden often visited the Shadows-on-the-Teche, to call on his friend, Weeks Hall. Beginning in the 1920s, Hall rebuilt the gardens at the Shadows, using the remnants of his grandmother's nineteenth century garden.



**Figure 109: Photograph by Steele Burden of Louisiana plantation house: Madewood on Bayou Teche.**



**Figure 110: Photograph by Steele Burden of unidentified Louisiana plantation house.**

What we do know of these remnant antebellum landscapes is that many of them included live oaks whose canopies had reached enormous size by the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The result was gardens in which only shade-loving plantings survived and flourished. Plants like ardisia, fern, azalea, pittosporum, camellia, sweet olive, evergreen ground covers, aspidistra, ground mosses, and many more would still have existed in these gardens. The other plantings that might have been extant would have been persistent flowering bulbs like narcissus, surprise lilies, zephyranthes or rain lilies, the white flag or cemetery lily, daylilies; and perennials that reseed easily and tend to escape cultivation, like pink coneflower, cleome or spider-flower, and Jerusalem artichoke. Although many of these plants have showy blooms, most of them are also valued for their glossy and strong foliage. These gardens beneath the canopy of ancient live oaks were essentially evergreen gardens during most of the year, with occasional seasonal interest during their short blooming periods, except camellia season which lasts most of the winter.

Steele Burden no doubt recognized not only the utility of these hardy plants that had survived decades of little or no care, but he also could see the incredible beauty of the subtle gradations of the various greens in the shadows of the trees' umbrellas, and the variety of textures that played one against the other in a plane of fairly consistent color. This kind of plant palette would stand Burden in good stead for his entire career as a planting designer; it also gave the gardens he designed a sense of age, continuity, and permanence. It had its origins in some of the earliest Louisiana landscapes created by Europeans and Americans who attempted to adapt the classical and naturalistic ideas of the past to the sub-tropical heat and humidity of a very different kind of landscape than they were used to.

What about the concept of delineating green rooms with focal points, the language so often used to describe Burden's spatial vocabulary? What were the specific sources for this approach to garden design? When we think of the gardens of colonial America, most of these are described as parterres, or geometrically patterned borders made of boxwood or another hedge plant, with smaller flowering plants within the borders. These parterres were organized with a central axis that led to either a landscape feature, such as a river, or to a garden ornament, such as a fountain or sculpture. In the plantation landscapes of Virginia, South Carolina, and Louisiana, for that matter, these gardens were intended to be fairly open, with trees planted along carriage drives and main plantation roads, but not shading these formal gardens. Perhaps this was in recognition of the fact that horticulturally, a parterre would not thrive for long if it became dominated by shade. And certainly it was because these gardens were intended to function as foregrounds for the view of the plantation houses, to emphasize the classicism of the architecture. One would not want to sully that view with a large tree or trees.



**Figure 111:** View of the Ashley River from the former site of the plantation house at Middleton Place, near Charleston, S.C.



**Figure 112:** Oak Alley, photo by Robert Tebbs, 1928.

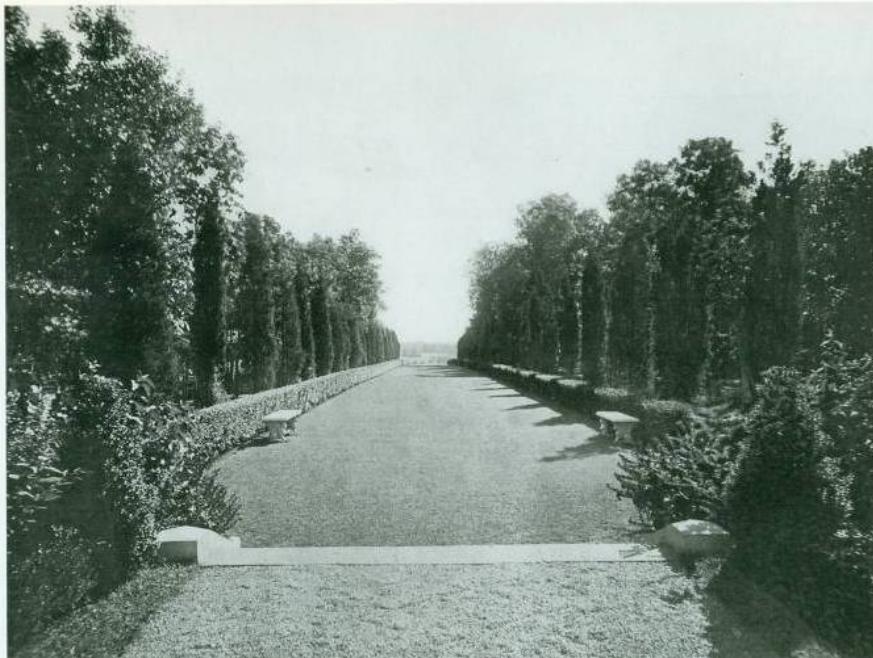


**Figure 113: Rosedown (south face), photo by Robert Tebbs, 1928.**

The difference in the spaces created in Burden's gardens and those of the antebellum antecedents that he followed is that his gardens consist of architectonic three-dimensional rooms, possessing the quality of intimacy and enclosure that were not a part of the antebellum parterre. This appreciation of plastic space was well-recognized by the time that Burden was designing his gardens. The question is simply which gardens in his travels had influenced him to design in this manner.

The 1920s and 1930s marked the end of what is called the Country Place Era in American Garden Design, the period during which the great industrialists of the East Coast and Midwest built estates in places like Long Island, Maine, the Hamptons, Forest Park, Illinois, and the areas near the Great Lakes, with designers like the Olmsted Brothers, Charles Platt, Ellen Shipman, Jens Jensen, and others creating lavish landscapes typified by

the use of restraint in the plant palette—mostly evergreen materials, architectonic use of plantings (hedges used as walls), and very direct extensions of the architectural plan into that of the landscape, with axes and cross-axes organizing the circulation plan.



**Figure 114: Knole, Westbury, Long Island, 1903, Carrère & Hastings, architects.**



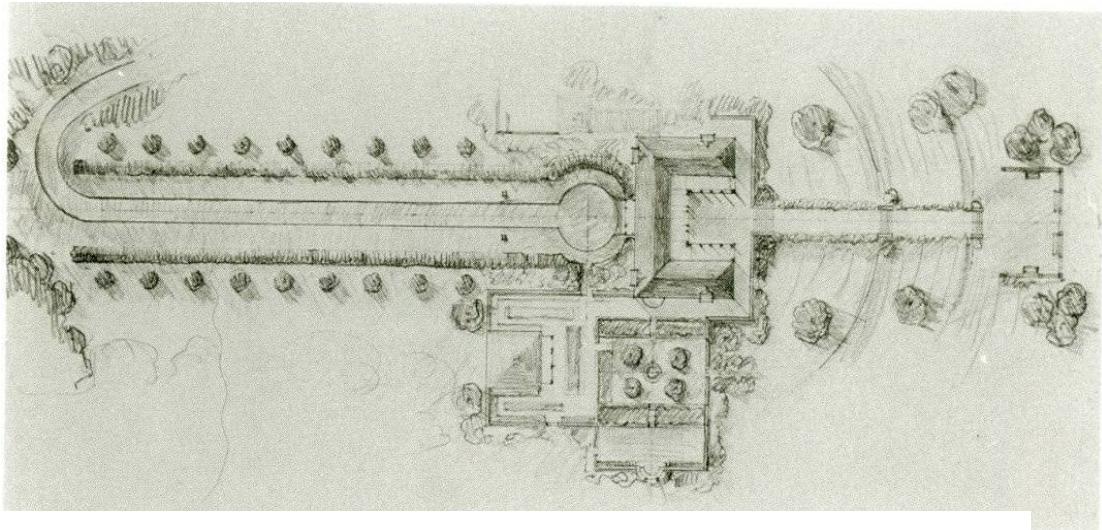
**Figure 115: Wingfield estate, Mt. Kisco, N.Y., c. 1920, Arthur Shurcliff, landscape architect.**



**Figure 116: Gardens from the Cornish Colony, New Hampshire. Lily pool, Northcote, 1898**



**Figure 117: Gardens from the Cornish Colony, New Hampshire. Herbert Croly estate, 1897, Charles Platt.**



**Figure 118:** Plan of High Court house and garden, Cornish, 1890-91, Charles Platt.

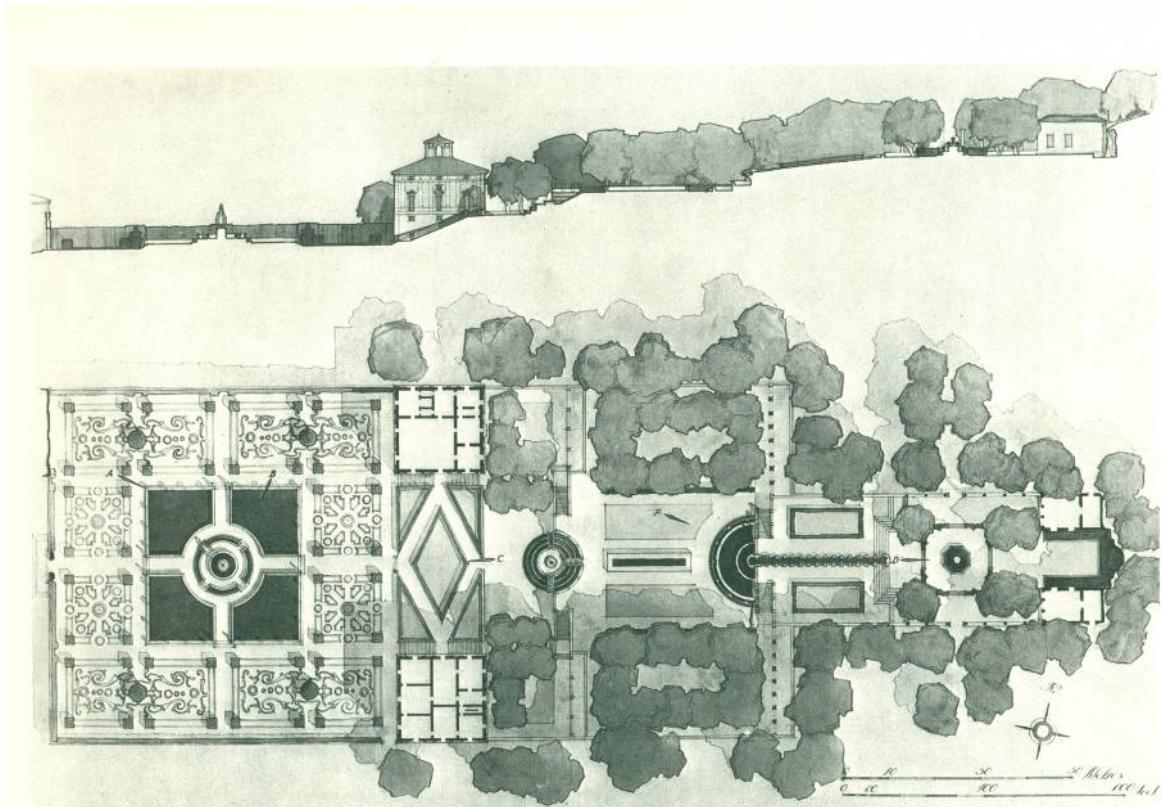


**Figure 119:** The Ellipse, Dumbarton Oaks, c. 1930. Beatrix Farrand, landscape architect.

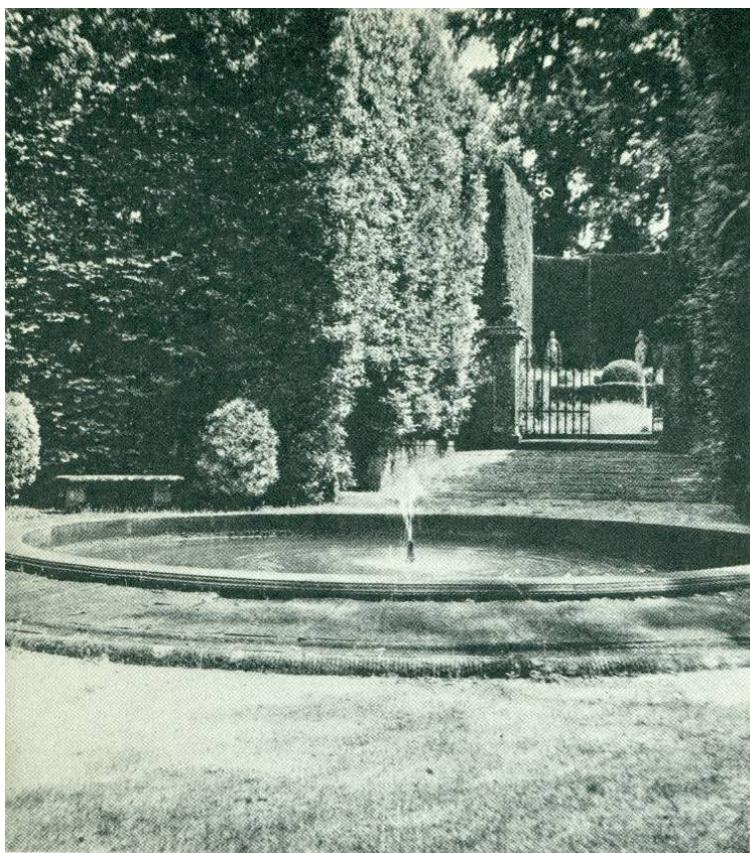


**Figure 120: Edsel and Eleanor Ford House, Michigan, c. 1928, Jens Jensen.** Notice the remarkable similarities between this garden and Windrush – in both scale and feeling.

Documentation does not survive as to whether or not Burden spent any time touring the great estates of the eastern seaboard or the Midwest. But the inspiration for most of these estates (and for that matter for many of the gardens that followed the Renaissance, including the plantation gardens of the South) were the gardens of the Italian Renaissance, and we can assume that if Burden toured any gardens in Europe, these would have been on his itinerary. There he would have seen first-hand the use of figural sculpture as focal points in garden rooms, the use of strong axial organization in delineating garden plans, the use of mostly evergreen materials to create various garden spaces, and the use of tree canopies to add even greater enclosure and sky-framing features than the perimeter walls of hedging did, although the effects of the Italian umbrella pines are quite different from that of the live oak canopy. Certainly, Italian gardens had the benefit of sloped topography to dramatize their compositions, something that south Louisiana did not offer. But otherwise, the influence of these most important of world gardens on Burden's garden rooms is fairly clear.



**Figure 121: Section and plan. Villa Lante, Bagnaia, Italy. 1564.**



**Figure 122: Ante-room leading to the green theatre of the Villa Marlia at Fraga near Lucca, a series of garden rooms dating from the seventeenth century.**



**Figure 123: The garden of the Villa Garzoni at Collodi, just beyond the province of Lucca, from the second half of the seventeenth century. The terraced treatment of the hillside is a Renaissance technique, but the way that the formal layout merges into the forested slopes is typically Baroque.**

When the gardens of Williamsburg were installed during the late 1920s and 1930s by landscape architect Arthur Shurcliff and others, the process was described as *garden restoration*, and these gardens were interpreted as colonial gardens for decades to come. They were touted as models to the preservation community of how one should approach the restoration of a vanished historic landscape. In the 1970s and 80s, garden archaeologists challenged these interpretations, and conducted more extensive archaeological and archival investigation than had been done in the initial Williamsburg restoration. What was discovered was that most of these “restored” gardens were far more formal, ornamental, and fanciful than what the evidence showed. Many of these “yards” had been strictly utilitarian and had been used for the daily tasks necessary to feed and clothe a family, and not merely for decorative purposes. And so most of the gardens were re-restored and interpreted using the new information that the archaeology and research provided. But in the meantime,

hundreds of gardens had been modeled based upon the gardens of Williamsburg, both at other historic sites and in suburban landscapes, because of the appeal of the style. These gardens were eventually dubbed “colonial revival gardens,” and are today acknowledged as having historic value in their own right because they are over fifty years old, and represent a period in American culture when the colonial past was being rediscovered and revered.



**Figure 124:** Gardens of Colonial Williamsburg showing what is today known as “colonial revival” garden design.



**Figure 125:** Gardens of Colonial Williamsburg showing what is today known as “colonial revival” garden design.

It is not simple to find a moniker under which to classify the gardens designed by Steele Burden, but it is clear that they are distinctive and not like those in most suburban landscape lots. Because the origins of Steele's gardens can be traced so directly to the gardens of the antebellum South, a possible name for his approach is proposed as the *southern antebellum revival* style.

## **SIX: Narrative History of the Evolution of Windrush Plantation into the LSU Burden Center**

Many forces coalesced to create today's Burden Center, but ultimately what shaped the landscape more powerfully than anything else was the agricultural heritage of the land itself, and the appreciation and concern for that past in the actions of Steele Burden, the site's most recent caretaker. The story of how the Burden family came to own the property begins long before Steele Burden's generation, and parallels, in many ways, the development of the frontier settlement of Baton Rouge through its development into a metropolitan area.

The first legal record of the land holding dates to 1812 when Section 41 (what would become Windrush Plantation) was granted to two brothers named William and Francis Thomas. Probably along with statehood had come a new recording of land holdings that were already settled, as well as the granting of new titles. The Thomas brothers managed to hold onto their land until the onset of the Civil War in 1861, when it was sold at sheriff's sale to William S. Pike, Sr. We have no reliable record of whether the Thomases built a dwelling on the property. At the time of the sale the section consisted of 600 acres near Ward's Creek south of Baton Rouge, including all improvements, machinery and farming implements, plus one slave named Nathan, 35 years of age (Phillips, 19).

### *The Pikes, the Burdens, and the Steeles*

William S. Pike, Sr., (1820-1875) was originally from Kentucky. In 1836, he founded a private banking company, Pike, Lapeyre and Brother, with offices in New Orleans and Baton Rouge (Phillips, 20). It is not clear when he came to live in Baton Rouge, but we know that he was living in the city by 1850. Although he only stayed in Baton Rouge until shortly after the Civil War – moving to New Orleans after end of the war – his mark upon the local landscape was significant. The land purchase on Ward's Creek was just one of many real estate investments that Pike made in the area. In the 1850s, he developed an office building complex on Florida Street near Third, called Pike's Row (Phillips, 19). Pike served as a delegate to the Louisiana Secession Convention. In 1861, he built Pike's Hall on Third Street between Convention and Florida, although the interior of the structure was not completed until 1866 because of the outbreak of the war. During the Civil War, the building was used as

a hospital for the sick and wounded, and as quarters for soldiers during the battles of Baton Rouge and Port Hudson. After the war, it was used primarily as a theater, but also for other gatherings, including political conventions. It served as the city's only theater until 1900 (Carleton, 99). Pike became known as an accomplished banker, merchant, and entrepreneur. In the 1860s he moved to New Orleans and lived there until his death in 1875 (Carleton, 72). In 1872 he married Mary Ann Huguet (Phillips, 20).

The Burden family enters the story when Pike's niece, Emma Gertrude Barbee, marries John Charles Burden in 1856. Burden had emigrated from England, leaving his ancestral home of Whitney, located on the Windrush River in the Cotswolds. By the 1850s he had settled in Baton Rouge. Section 41 was apparently either given to the couple by Barbee's uncle William S. Pike, Sr., or at least Pike granted the couple permission to use the land. The Burdens are believed to be the ones who built the summer house at what came to be called Windrush.

The 1860 census listed Burden as a merchant, whereas the 1870 census listed him as a farmer (Phillips, 20). Perhaps the availability of the acreage moved him to re-think his career choice. Also, living at Windrush through the years of the war would have felt much safer than life in town where Union soldiers and their gunboats were a constant presence. It appears, however, that Windrush did not weather the war unscathed, despite its isolated location. The American-British Claims Commission lists claims by John C. Burden of Baton Rouge for stolen property, and damage and destruction to a house, beginning on July, 1862, again that August, and the following April and August of 1863, and finally in January of 1864. In addition to the loss of provisions and livestock, Burden claims almost \$6,000 for damage and destruction to a house (Web address, Google, "American-British Claims Commission," Claim no. 311). Unless Burden owned another property with a house and livestock, then this must have been the summer house at Windrush Plantation. And if the original house dates to 1856, as the museum states in its interpretation, then it would have had to have been significantly repaired or rebuilt after the war.

During reconstruction, it would have been easier to feed and support a family through farming than in the competitive mercantile business that was mired in deep recession. Burden

died in 1872 at the young age of 38.<sup>8</sup> The size of his estate speaks to the economic condition of his family during the trying times—he owned five mules, fifteen cows and heifers, thirty-eight acres of sugar cane, eight bales of cotton, and two hundred and fifty bushels of corn (Phillips, 21). At Burden’s death, much of the responsibility for the family (his mother, three sisters, and two brothers, (Phillip, 28) fell to William Stephen Pike Burden, named after the great-uncle whose land had become their home. It would be his 1895 marriage that would bring the Windrush story into the generation that would shape the landscape that exists today.

In 1895, William Burden, Sr., married Ollie Brice Steele, the eldest child of O.B. and Juliet Steele. The Steele family arrived in Baton Rouge in the 1880s. Oliver Brice Steele (O.B., 1844-1919) was born in Henderson, Kentucky, fought with Kentucky’s Fourth Infantry in the Civil War, came to Baton Rouge to fight in the Battle of Baton Rouge, but was ill and missed the battle. Regardless, he was promoted to captain because of his distinguished service throughout the war, and he returned to Louisiana after the war. He was partner in a mercantile business in Morehouse Parish in 1866, but by 1869 had moved to New Orleans to work for a wholesale dry goods business. But before a year had passed, he had moved again, this time to Quachita City near Monroe, where he met and married Juliet Parks in 1870 or 1871 (Phillips, 21).

Steele was able to farm considerable acreage in Union, Morehouse, and Quachita Parishes, became successful, and apparently had political ambitions. He was elected state auditor in 1884 and 1888, and state treasurer in 1892. His election to state office prompted the family to move to Baton Rouge, where they lived at the corner of North and Third Streets. He became an active member of the business and social community and, in 1889, established, along with W. J. Knox, the Bank of Baton Rouge on Third Street. In 1916, he resigned from this bank to head a new bank that would combine the Mercantile Bank and the Capital City Bank (Phillips, 23).

William S. Pike Burden, Sr., Steele’s son-in-law, was a graduate of LSU, and his stationery stated that he was a dealer in “coal, stove, and cord wood.” Perhaps his father-in-law’s experience in public service influenced the young man to follow suit. He ran for

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<sup>8</sup> Although 38 may seem exceedingly young for death, the average life expectancy of white males in 1870 in the U.S. was 45.2 years (“Life Expectancy by Age, 1850-2004,” <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0005140.html>).

commissioner of public parks and streets of Baton Rouge, but lost; after 1895, he did win the office of city auditor/treasurer and held the position until his death in 1925 (Phillips, 24).

More importantly to the story of Windrush, however, he and his wife Ollie had three children, each of whom would figure prominently in the development of Windrush Plantation and the Burden Center—Ione Easter Burden, William Stephen Pike Burden, Jr., and Ollie Brice Steele Burden.

#### *The 20th century Burdens and Windrush Plantation*

With the death of Mary Huggett Pike in 1905, Burden acquired full title to Windrush Plantation. He began farming the land, and took the family there for weekends (Phillips, 25). Ione would have been nine years old, Pike, seven, and Steele, five. For children who had been living in the very compact neighborhood of Spanish Town north of downtown Baton Rouge and adjacent to the LSU campus, Windrush must have been quite a contrast.

In 1921, the Burden family moved permanently to Windrush Plantation to continue farming and to raise cattle. These early years of residence at Windrush must have been bucolic in some ways, because finally the Burdens were able to live on the farm that they'd been tending and nurturing for nearly two decades, although there was certainly a lot of work to be done to adapt the place for full-time living. During the first years in residence, Ollie and particularly Steele, who would have been twenty-one at the time, wasted no time beginning the creative task of landscaping the grounds of the Windrush House. They both had a love of plants and gardening, and together they began to develop what would become Windrush Gardens, the outdoor rooms that today lead from the original house towards the heart of the property and the Rural Life Museum. Steele however, had wanderlust, and during these early years, when he was not gardening, he traveled to Europe and South America, seeking passage on cargo ships, touring the great gardens of the world, and bringing back sculpture and garden ornament with which to accent the garden spaces that he and his mother were delineating.



(The above image is tied to an AVI film and within the digital copy, can be accessed and watched on a personal computer. 16mm original provided by John and Frances Monroe).

Tragically, four years after the family's permanent move to Windrush, in 1925, Burden, Sr., died of heart failure at the age of fifty-five. The Burdens had raised their children to follow their instinctive talents and tastes, and by the time of their father's death, each had set out on an individual career path, although it would have been difficult to articulate what, exactly, Steele's path was at the time; but it included gardening, collecting and connoisseurship, for certain.

Dr. Lester James Williams, the husband of Ollie Steele's sister Mayme, stepped into the role of head of the family, advising Ollie and Ione on investments, and helping Pike Jr. start his printing business. Williams was the chief of staff at Our Lady of the Lake Hospital, located north of the present site of the State Capitol (Phillips, 25). The relationship between the Burdens and the hospital would become important much later, when in 1978 the hospital closed its original location and relocated next-door to the Burden property on Essen Lane.

When Ollie Burden found herself a widow at fifty-five, she was faced with several daunting challenges, primarily the management of a 500-acre land holding, without the experience and counsel of her husband, or the labor necessary to work such a large place. Her children were at various stages in their lives, although they each maintained a strong connection to the family and to Windrush.

Ione had entered LSU in 1913 to study English, and had received her degree in 1917. At the time of her father's death she was working as assistant registrar for the university, where she had been working since graduation (Phillips, 14-15, 33). Son Pike had attended LSU but had not graduated. He enlisted in the military air corps during World War I, where he learned to fly, one of his passions. After the war he went into the printing and publishing business, eventually forging the very successful Pike Burden, Inc., printing press company. In 1923 Pike married Jeannette Monroe, and the couple built a very small house across the lane from the Windrush summer house. Steele had also studied at LSU, forestry mostly, although the dates of his enrollment are disputed, ranging from either 1917 to 1919 or 1915 to 1916 (Phillips, 43). While at the university Steele joined the Student Army Training Corps, but he was too young to enlist for service in World War I. A college degree was not part of Steele's life plans either, and he left LSU without completing his studies and graduating.



**Figure 126: Unknown aviator with Jeannette in the cockpit of a plane.**

One wonders what kind of a person Ollie Burden was, once one discovers how interesting, idiosyncratic, and iconoclastic each of her three children were. We know that she was courageous and adventurous, tackling the cattle business alone, learning how to raise, breed, and market cattle. She realized that she would need help to make the farm viable, and so she had ten tenant-houses built, and rented these, each with land to farm. With the income from the cattle and the tenants, she managed to maintain ownership of Windrush through some of the harshest economic times that the country had ever experienced, culminating in the stock market crash of 1929 (Phillips, 28).

About 1925, an important relationship with LSU began to develop at Windrush that would have important implications for the site's future, as well as for that of LSU. John Gray, an agriculture professor at LSU, began to conduct agricultural research experiments on soybeans as a commercial crop on the Burden land near the present entrance on Essen Lane. Soon, the Burden family permitted other departments in the College of Agriculture to do research projects on the plantation, thus establishing an association that would lead to the development of the LSU Agriculture Center's Burden Plantation (later Research Center).

Burden's death was no doubt difficult for his children; both Ione and Steele found new jobs shortly after his death. In 1926, Ione left the security of her job at LSU to take a better position as registrar at Louisiana Tech in Ruston. Perhaps the relocation of the LSU campus had something to do with her job change, or perhaps it was simply her desire to advance in her profession. But Ione's stint in Ruston was not a long one. She may have been disappointed at the size of the university, the size of the community, or the isolated nature of its geography. In any case, by 1929, she was hired as the secretary to the dean of the College of William and Mary, where she would work until 1932.

This would have been a fascinating time to be living in Williamsburg, Virginia, and working essentially next-door to Colonial Williamsburg. With the preservation work having commenced in 1926, the project would have been in full swing, and Ione would have had the opportunity to witness much of the initial restoration work in the colonial capital, as well as to meet many of the major players in the project's planning and implementation. Reportedly, she asked her brother Steele to come and visit her several times, but it is uncertain whether he ever took her up on the invitation. There can be no doubt that Ione and Steele discussed the

restoration project, and that it made an impression on the two that would affect their plans for the future of Windrush. Faye Phillips, in her *LSU Rural Life Museum and Windrush Gardens, A Living History*, writes that

Ione was sensitive to the historic preservation activity she saw as she traveled, and she was always interested in the gardens. Her letters describe in great detail the gardens and houses of George Washington, George Mason, and Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. She told Miss Ollie that even though she had been to Monticello at all times of the year, she was not sure which she thought was most beautiful but that certainly the spring was the 'most alluring' (37-38).

Ione often sent plants to her mother and Steele for them to try out in the gardens at Windrush (Phillips, 38).

In 1925, Burden, decided that he needed to do something more professional and steady, and so he took a job with the Baton Rouge City Parks Department (Phillips, 51). He was able to apprentice under a landscape architect who worked for the American Park Builders, the landscape architecture firm from Chicago, to design and construct City Park in Baton Rouge. Burden was very involved in the implementation of their plan for the park, and planted many, if not all of the original trees in the park.

Although Burden also moonlighted as a garden designer/contractor for clients in the community, he continued to develop the gardens at home, along with his mother. In 1926, he constructed the brick garden house that would serve as his art studio. He had apparently always been artistic, and wanted a place of his own where he could be creative in the setting of the garden he was developing. Later in life, Burden credited his love of beauty, and especially the beauty in nature, to his grandfather, O. B. Steele, who had been an amateur painter and art collector. Steele recounted how as a youth on Laurel Street, "he first saw azaleas and wanted to learn everything about them" (Phillips, 44).

Perhaps a reason that Burden was not as anxious or able to visit Ione in Virginia was the fact that he had traveled to Paris in 1929 for the meeting of the American Legion. We have no idea what else Burden did while on the continent, nor whether this was his first trip there. But by 1930, Burden's talent for landscape design must have begun to be evident to some in the city, at least to those who had had an opportunity to either visit the grounds of the Windrush House or to see his handiwork at City Park. In 1930 LSU Professor James Broussard (who would later become Dean of Men) asked Burden to assist in landscaping the

new LSU campus (Phillips, 52). Burden refused to accept the job full-time, claiming that he had not yet completed the work in City Park, and had made commitments to private clients as well. He did, however, begin working at the university, a relationship that would result in the LSU campus taking on the very distinctive landscape character that is so important to its nationally acclaimed campus today.



**Figure 127:** This 1932 view of the Place d'Etoile in Paris is an example of the kinds of landscapes that Steele Burden would have experienced in European capitals, with great avenues of tree-lined streets, and fountains used to enrich important places in the landscape.

Important to this period was the relationship that Steele Burden developed with E. A. McIlhenny at Avery Island, Louisiana. McIlhenny, a remarkably accomplished naturalist and horticulturist, had developed a nursery on his property on the salt dome island and named it Jungle Gardens, Inc. Most of the plant materials for the LSU campus were purchased from this nursery. Burden would travel south to the nursery to select and transport the plants, stopping sometimes in New Iberia to visit his artist-friend Weeks Hall, owner-in-residence at Shadow-on-the-Teché. Beginning in the 1920s, McIlhenny had also created an extraordinary ornamental garden on the island, also called Jungle Gardens, filled with exotic botanical

specimens from around the world. There, beneath the canopies of native live oaks, McIlhenny planted four hundred varieties of camellias, over a hundred azalea varieties, over fifty junipers, and over a thousand iris varieties. As a plant introduction testing station for the USDA, he also developed a nationally important bamboo collection. The various spaces of what eventually became more than 170 acres of gardens must have impressed Burden, for the plants were artfully arranged in the very interesting topographic zones of the island landscape. These visits with both of these very knowledgeable plantsmen would have been important influences on the young Steele Burden, who was in the first decade of practicing landscape design, an art that would become his life's work.



**Figure 128: Water is a large part of the experience at Avery Island and Jungle Gardens.**



**Figure 129:** This view of the entrance to the Sunken Gardens illustrates McIlhenny's love of exotic foliage and his use of large masses of contrasting colors and textures.



**Figure 130:** Within the Sunken Garden a rockwork pool is featured. Giant elephant ears dwarf the person in the center of the photo.



**Figure 131:** The curly leaf bamboo shown here is only one of the many rare species grown by McIlhenny on the island.



**Figure 132:** McIlhenny was fascinated with the plants of Asia that were so well adapted to the climate of the Louisiana Gulf Coast. His collection of Japanese iris could have influenced Steele Burden to eventually begin his own collection of native Louisiana iris around the edges of the lake that he built as an extension of Windrush Gardens.



**Figure 133: McIlhenny was a pioneer conservationist and in 1890 built “Bird City” as a rookery to re-establish the local population of snowy egrets. Steele Burden had wanted for many years to build a bird habitat on the shores of the University Lakes, and was finally successful in 1979.**

*Windrush is divided and given further shape by the Burden children*

By 1934 Miss Ollie was nearing the age of 65 and was struggling to pay the property taxes on the acreage of Windrush. She made the decision to divide the property among her three children, giving Ione the tract surrounding Windrush House and the gardens; Pike, Jr., a tract on which, in the late 1930s, he and his wife Jeannette would build what is today the Monroe residence; and Steele, a portion that contained heavily planted piney woods where today the garden lakes are located, as well as the land that became the Rural Life Museum. This must have given the three a certain amount of “permission” to make decisions about how they might want to live on their property; it also made them partners in the responsibility for planning the property’s “highest and best use,” given the values that the Burden family shared about the land and its history. As a result of the split of ownership, Ione took over the entire Windrush House, where she would live for many years. She had returned to live in Baton Rouge in 1933, taking the position of assistant to the dean of student affairs (Phillips, 35). Steele lived in the summer house with her, but in 1938, he purchased a house in the French Quarter on Dauphine Street, to use as a second home and studio. The house had been

built in 1822; he restored it, dividing it into three apartments and a studio, and landscaped the large courtyard (Phillips, 61).

In 1940, Pike and Jeannette moved the small frame house in which they had been living to the rear of their property, and built a West Indies style two-story house, designed by New Orleans architect Richard Koch, now the home of John and Frances Monroe. Pike and Jeannette's original house is used as a guest cottage/office by the Monroes.

In 1942, at the outbreak of World War II, Steele Burden volunteered for the effort, joining the 84<sup>th</sup> engineering battalion. He was stationed at Camp Livingston near Alexandria for eighteen months (Phillips, 43). After his military service, he again went to work for Francis Parkinson Keyes at the Cottage, creating a garden beneath the existing live oaks that included plantings of Cherokee roses and white wisteria (Phillips, 60). Keyes spent her winters in the Beauregard House in the New Orleans French Quarter, and Burden was involved with the restoration of the walled parterre garden adjoining the house, staying in the carriage house for five years during the restoration process (Phillips, 60-61). There was a Notarial Archives measured drawing of the Beauregard House dating from the nineteenth century that showed the exact configuration of the garden, so restoring it would have involved laying it out based upon this plan, and the careful selection of plants that interpreted the plan appropriately.

At the end of the war, Steele Burden went to work for LSU full-time, and continued working there until he retired in 1970. Initially, he didn't have an office to work from on campus, but at some point, he saw what he said was an old out-house that he had moved from a location near the stadium to a place near the maintenance barn on the edge of campus. He landscaped it with so much lush tropical vegetation and a small fountain that it seemed like an impressive address. From here, he managed to use the plants that were so familiar within the region, and that he had seen at the plantations that he visited, creating a plant palette for the campus that it still recognizable to this day. It included yaupon, pittosporum, sasanqua and japonica camellias, azaleas, nandinas, crape myrtles, and, of course, live oaks. According to Phillips, Burden denied planting all of the live oaks on campus, although he is often credited with this, but he did take credit for the plantings of the distinctive groupings of Japanese magnolias (53). The two most magnificent of these groupings stand near the Music

Building and Pleasant Hall, in front of groves of crape myrtles. Unfortunately other groves have been removed in the past decade because they created “unsafe” areas, in terms of night visibility and crime.

Once Steele Burden settled into his LSU job, he must have entered a time when his design ability blossomed, and he must have felt particularly content in his artistic pursuits. During this period, he developed the large area of Windrush Garden to the south of the first garden portions near the house, as circular garden rooms surrounded by shrub beds (Phillips, 48). It was during this period that he began sculpting the small clay caricatures that not only expressed his ability in three-dimensional composition, but more than anything, they communicated his highly personal sense of humor, sometimes dark, usually sarcastic, and always surprising. These figurines are often collected by Baton Rougeans, and the Rural Life Museum has a large inventory of these small sculptures.

One of the challenges of making larger garden rooms – as Steele Burden was beginning to do at Windrush – was the increased labor initially required to create the gardens, and more significantly, the labor that was necessary to maintain them, particularly through the dry times during the hot summers. According to John Monroe, “Steele himself cut the lawn areas with a walk behind power mower during early periods of the garden’s development” (Monroe, *Burden Horticulture Society Reflections and Visions*). In August 1950 Steele Burden wrote to his sister Ione who was summering in the Blue Ridge Mountains, that he “finally had a yard man, Albert Raby” (Phillips, 36). Albert “George” Raby, originally from Highland Plantation in the St. Francisville area, had gone to work for Pike Burden at the printing shop in the early 1940s, and continued working there for the next 40 years (Raby oral history interview). He must have come out to Windrush to work for Steele as well, and assisted him from that point forward. Raby still continues to assist the Monroes with their yard to this day. One of the things that we know that Raby did early on was to plant the oak alley that lines Burden Lane, which was the approach that the family used at the time to reach Windrush. Perhaps it was the security of knowing that Raby would care for his gardens while he travelled that gave Burden the freedom to plan a trip in 1947. He sailed to South America aboard the Marion Lykes ship, but where he went specifically, we do not know.

In 1957 Ione Burden suffered a heart attack (Phillips, 35), and the following year her mother, Mrs. Ollie Burden, died at the age of 87. These events made the Burden siblings keenly aware of their own mortality, and they began to think about the ultimate disposition of their land, exploring the possibility of donating it to the state of Louisiana (Phillips, 39). Miss Ione retired as director of student activities at LSU in 1961 at age 65, and had more time to work with her brothers on planning Windrush's future. That same year, in order to prepare for a future donation, they established the Burden Foundation. Its purpose was to "accept and administer gifts, donations, grants and bequests, and manage those and make donations to others; promote and conduct activities; assist in furnishing of physical facilities; give scholarships for the above purposes; and provide for the general educational and recreational welfare through parks, zoos, and facilities" (Phillips, 39).



**Figure 134: Miss Ione Burden and a family dog.**

One of the first donations made was thirty acres on the northeastern edge of the property for a retirement home and long-term care facility to be named in honor of the Burdens' mother, Ollie Steele Burden. Ground was broken for the construction of Ollie

Steele Burden Manor in 1964, and the Manor was opened in 1966. Steele Burden developed the landscape, including a courtyard, walks, and surrounding garden areas.

*Decision made to donate Windrush Plantation to LSU over time; Rural Life Museum begun*

The Burden family investigated giving their property to several different institutions, but ultimately chose Louisiana State University. During this period the state explored various ways that it might utilize the donation, if it were the recipient. While these decisions were still underway, Pike died at the age of 67 in 1965. By 1966, the decision had been made to donate the property to LSU in parcels of fifty acres annually until the entire 450 acres had been transferred. The act of donation specified that the land could be used only for academic buildings and complexes, gardens, experimental purposes relating to agriculture, parks or arboretums, forest and wildlife reserves, and caretaker's residences. Also stipulated was that the wooded areas should remain as natural wilderness areas. In the late 1960s, thirty acres were sold to the federal government because Interstate 10 had been designed to cut through the middle of the Windrush property.



**Figure 135: Caretaker and benefactor of Windrush and the Rural Life Museum, Miss Ione Burden.**



**Figure 136: Caretakers and benefactors of Windrush and the Rural Life Museum, Miss Ione Burden and her younger brother Steele.**

With LSU's acceptance of the property, the Agricultural Center appointed Dr. Louis Anzalone as the first resident director. Dr. Anzalone used the Hostler's House, an existing structure across the lane from the Monroe House, as his office. There is little documentation about what occurred during his administration, except that the entire property was fenced with a farm fence of creosote posts and barbed wire, and an irrigation system was installed in

the open fields (Meadows, 10). We can assume that the soybean experiments continued as well. Mr. Al Jarreau was the farm manager at the time, and lived in the brick caretaker's house near the Essen Lane entrance after LSU assumed ownership (Meadows, 10).

The first public word of the formation of the donation appeared in the April 23, 1967, *Sunday Advocate*, where an article cited that LSU would preserve garden areas, and that a public museum would be developed depicting rural life, along with a five-mile walking trail around the 150 acres of woodland and man-made lakes (Phillips, 67). The germ of the idea for the Rural Life Museum had come when Steele Burden discovered a small collection of folk art, antique tools, and other nineteenth century Louisiana cultural artifacts that had been accumulated by LSU faculty and were being stored on the ground floor of the Cow Palace. Burden was concerned about the future of this group of artifacts, and enlisted support from LSU chancellor emeritus Cecil "Pete" Taylor, who was sympathetic to his desire to preserve the state's agricultural way of life on plantations and small farms. Burden was given permission to move the collection to either the Hosteler's House or his garden studio at Windrush where it was combined with his own collection of nineteenth century objects. He then took on the responsibility of caring for the combined assemblage of artifacts (Phillips, 55).

In 1970, Steele Burden retired from LSU, although he continued to maintain an interest in the campus landscape. He enlisted the university's assistance in building a metal-roofed storage building on the Burden property to house the new collection. He soon discovered that many of the buildings of Welham Plantation, on the River Road near New Orleans, were slated for demolition because of the pending construction of an industrial facility, and so he was able to acquire three cabins, the former overseer's house, and a nearby church building to move to Windrush and form the nucleus of an outdoor architectural museum (Phillips, 57)—the "extension" of his collection of nineteenth century things. Burden had visited the Open Air Museum in Copenhagen, Denmark, (Phillips, 56) one of the largest and oldest outdoor museums of vernacular architecture in the world, on eighty-six acres of land, and housing more than fifty farms, mills, and houses from the period 1650-1950 ("Open Air Museum," <http://www.natmus.dk/sw20384.asp> ). This museum was founded in 1897. The world's first open-air museum was Skansen, begun in 1891 in

Stockholm. It was a collection of 150 farm building, houses, workshops, and other historic structures from all over Sweden displayed in naturally landscaped grounds, amidst traditional breeds of livestock and wildlife (“Skansen,” <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skansen>, accessed July 27, 2010). Perhaps Burden had also visited Skansen when he was travelling in Scandinavia.

#### *Steele Burden retires from LSU and Rural Life Collection Grows*

With the genesis of a collection underway, Burden decided to divide the outdoor museum into two sections—the plantation region and the upland south. From 1970 on, he was a fervent collector of buildings and artifacts that could communicate the story of life during the nineteenth century in these two parts of the state. One of his first acquisitions was an 1880 cane grinder. Burden used the overseer’s house and an addition as a school house, and he adapted one of the cabins as a blacksmith’s shop. In 1971 the first open house was held at the Rural Life Museum (Phillips, 105).

In 1972 the Windrush House, including Windrush Gardens, was donated to LSU with the provision that the family would continue to remain living in the home as long as they desired. Burden hired Mike Jones as the first employee, and Jones became the curator of the Rural Life Museum (Phillips, 55). A replica of a sugar house was built on the grounds of the museum, based upon drawings of historic sugar houses (Phillips, 75). Burden was able to acquire additional buildings from Welham Plantation and moved a double-pen slave cabin, a sick house, and a commissary. He also obtained a pioneer cabin and corn crib from Washington Parish, enabling him to begin the upland south section (Phillips, 83, 93). In 1973 an African-American church from College Point, St. James Parish near Welham, was moved to Rural Life. Also obtained during this year was a 1930s railroad depot which was used to interpret a smokehouse (Phillips, 87, 102).

In 1974 John Dutton was hired as the second curator of the Rural Life Museum. Dutton would work alongside Burden for many years, travelling the back roads looking for acquisitions and donations. In 1975, a sculpture, sometimes called “Uncle Jack,” was donated to the museum. Created by sculptor Hans Schuler, former director of the Maryland Institute of Art, the piece depicts an elderly African-American man tipping his hat. The sculpture had

become controversial in its original location in Natchitoches because of civil rights issues, so it became a “welcome” feature in the entry circle outside the museum parking lot<sup>9</sup> (Phillips, 88-90).

When there was a house type that Burden felt was critical for his collection, but that was not available or was too difficult to move, he would have a replica constructed with the assistance of W. J. Brown, contractor.<sup>10</sup> In addition to the occasional replication, Brown did reconstruction, renovation, and repair on the entire assemblage as it was brought to the site. This was the case in 1975 when he added an Acadian house to the museum. In 1976, a shotgun house from Augusta Plantation at Bayou Goula was donated and it was interpreted as a late nineteenth century plantation office. An important discovery by John Dutton in 1979 was a dogtrot house, located west of Alexandria, which was moved to the museum (Phillips, 95). In 1982, a circa1840 single pen slave cabin from Tyron Plantation in Rapides Parish was moved to the museum and is displayed in such a way that the construction techniques used to assemble it are visible to guests (Phillips, 76).

In 1978, Our Lady of the Lake Hospital moved from its original location on Capitol Lake north of the State Capitol, to land adjacent to Windrush. For a decade, it had become obvious that the parish population center had moved farther and farther away from downtown and north Baton Rouge, and the Essen Lane location was ideally suited to serve the east and south trending population migration, with interstate access provided by the newly completed Interstate 10. Steele Burden was instrumental in designing the landscape of the courtyard, the hospital grounds, and the street tree plantings leading to the hospital entrance, although by this time, he was nearing 80 years old.

Steele Burden had always said that he didn’t want a job where he’d have to do the same thing every day, and certainly he’d managed to do that both in his work in the landscape at LSU, where he could tackle a new part of the campus when he wished, and especially at Rural Life, where much of his time was spent pursuing artifacts and structures to add to the collection. As he began to feel that his collection of house types was nearing

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<sup>9</sup> In 2010, the sculpture had become a divisive symbol among visitors and some patrons of the museum, and the decision was made to relocate it inside the new museum building, removing it from its position of importance at the entry, and reinterpreting it as an emblem of attitudes of a past period.

<sup>10</sup> In addition to the occasional replication, Brown did reconstruction, renovation, and repair on the entire assemblage as it was brought to the site.

completion, and that the space for exhibition was nearing capacity, he looked for new opportunities to exercise his creative talents. In the mid 1970s, Burden developed the large lakes to the south of the Rural Life area and adjacent to Windrush Gardens, in the hopes that they would attract waterfowl. These lakes were connected to the gardens by a pine woodland that he designed as an extension of the garden experience, but in a more naturalistic or informal design vocabulary. He established informal paths through the pines and planted azaleas, camellias, and other understory species. He then went about planting the edges of the lakes with as many varieties of Louisiana iris as he could acquire, so that in spring there was and still is a stunning display of multiple colors. He also landscaped the two islands in the larger of the ponds. Burden had hoped that there could be some sort of animal sanctuary established at Rural Life, but this idea did not gain traction during his lifetime.



**Figure 137: In his “retirement,” Steele Burden was a constant figure in the landscape, feeding the ducks, cutting roses to deliver to his friends, walking his gardens, and checking on activities at the Rural Life Museum.**

There is no catalogued documentation that records when Steele Burden began developing the area now known as the Scott Duchein Barton Arboretum. According to an

interview with Malcolm Tucker, who worked with Burden and George Raby for many years, Burden selected the area as a place to grow Louisiana native trees and plants, and he began to move these kinds of materials from the woods into the edges of the clearing, along a footpath, so that the trees could eventually be displayed to visitors. He moved many dogwoods, and several kinds of oaks into the embryonic arboretum. He also wanted to include palmetto in the collection. Because palmettos are very difficult to transplant, he collected the seed from the wild, and then had Tucker and Raby germinate them for moving into the arboretum. According to Tucker, they personally grew all of the palmetto in the arboretum from seed.

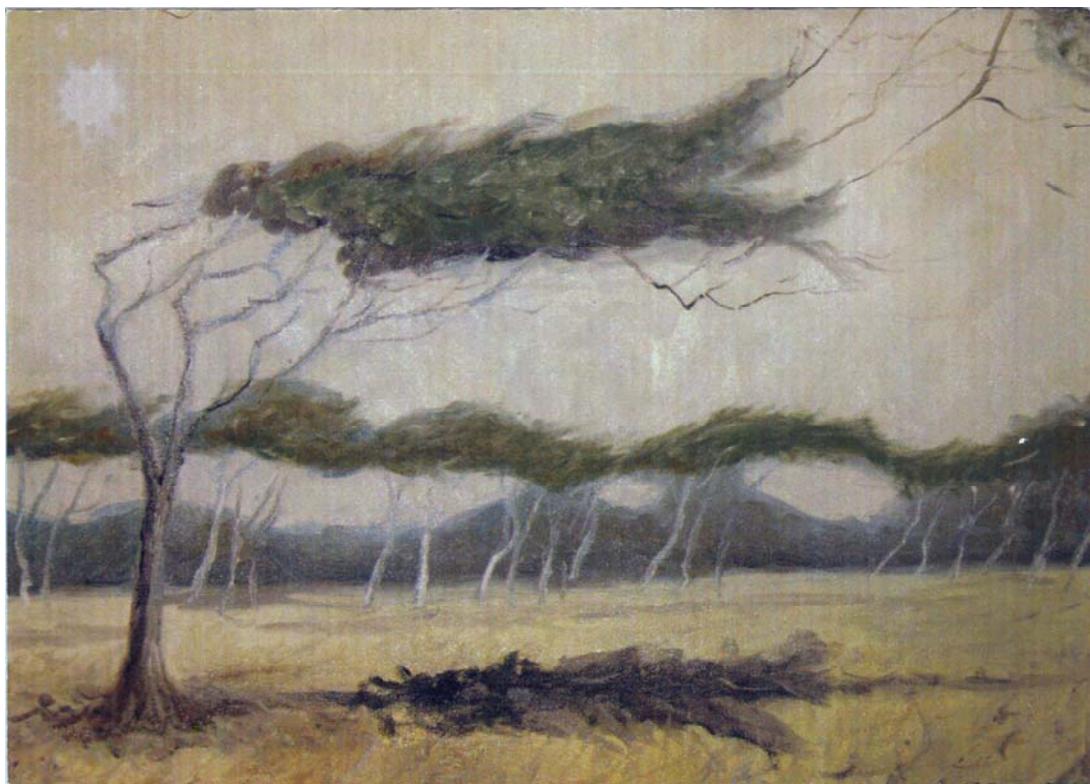
As Burden would come across other native species, he would add them to the arboretum. He eventually added a pond to the landscape to offer a different kind of habitat for tree species. When Scott Duchein Barton died in 1991, Burden proposed that the arboretum be named as a memorial to this dear friend who had been a sorority sister of Ione Burden's and was also a founding member of the Board of the Burden Foundation (Interview with Annette Barton and Malcolm Tucker, 11/30/10).

### *Steele Burden the Artist*

Burden's artistic talent was evident in everything that he undertook, whether landscape design, architectural design, drawing, painting, ceramics, or photography. Several sketches of vernacular scenes clearly show his drawing abilities. His photographs are works of art, although he was probably simply scouting for the Rural Life Museum or documenting Windrush Gardens. But the composition of his photos demonstrates the eye of one who understands the principles of art, and who has an internal eye for finding the beautiful in the most mundane of scenes. The vision with which he shaped the museum and added structures needed for the representation of vernacular architecture indicates an extraordinary planner at work, with skills in creating plastic space and manipulating architecture and landscape that many trained architects would envy.



**Figure 138:** Sketch by Steele Burden is representative of his freehand style.



**Figure 139:** "Windblown," painting by Steele Burden.



**Figure 140:** Another sketch by Steele Burden that represents his freehand style.



Figure 141: Photo of vernacular house with laundry hanging and fence illustrates Steele Burden's keen eye for visual composition. He loved "pieux" fences, a vernacular style indigenous to south Louisiana.

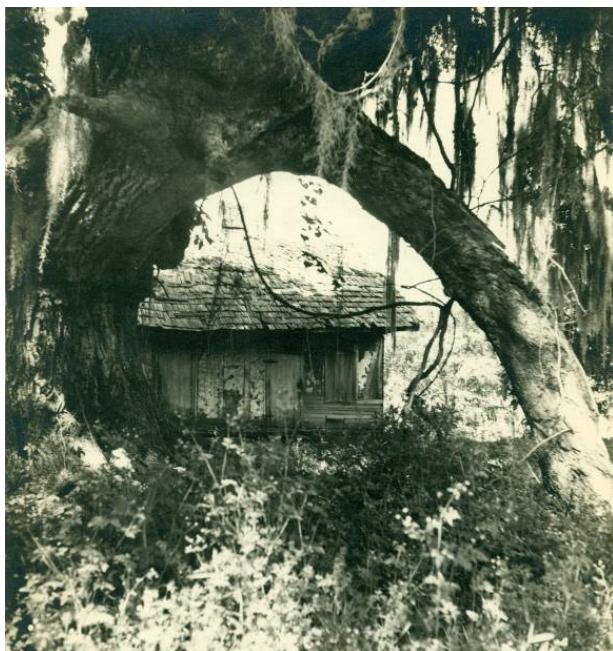


Figure 142: Another example of Burden's acumen for artistic photographic compositions, showing an arched tree trunk with decaying building in the background. These arched branches could possibly be the source for the later installation of the arched addition to the end of Steele's studio.

*New Leadership from the Agricultural Center initiates more active partnership*

In 1979 Dr. Warren Meadows was appointed as resident director of what was then called the Burden Research Plantation. At the time, the support staff for the facility included a supervisor and three laborers as permanent employees, and three seasonal employees (Meadows, 6). This was a small and unskilled staff for a farm of several hundred acres with many specialized plantings requiring knowledgeable care. The shortage of labor (translated to budget constraints) has continued to plague the operation of the Burden Center throughout its existence.

Meadows saw the tremendous opportunities that the Burden land offered for developments related to ornamental horticultural that would appeal to the general public. He used his leadership skills and his knowledge of the administrative “ropes” to accomplish some of his visions. First, he established meaningful relationships with both Ione and Steele Burden and gained their respect. He realized that Ione was very interested in the research potential of Burden, having always placed a high priority on scholarship. Steele, he learned, was more interested in the results of the research, or the plants themselves. Both of the Burdens were excited about the prospect of an increased emphasis on horticulture, and less acreage dedicated to soybeans, according to Meadows (5).

Meadows recounts that “one of the first things I did after being officially named Superintendent at Burden was to mow and clear the weed fields from the Essen Lane entrance to the wooden bridge on the road to the museum.” He recounts that the only equipment at the time was a medium sized John Deere tractor, so he had to borrow a bush hog to do the initial clearing (Meadows, 10). Near a small new greenhouse, he discovered two abandoned planting rows while doing this work, and asked Jarreau what they were. They had been rows of roses planted by the Horticulture Department sometime in the past. Meadows recalled how at mid-century the area on the main LSU campus now occupied by sorority row parking used to be a huge rose garden, and during peak bloom, traffic backed up with community members driving by to view the floral display. He decided to start a small rose display garden in the rows, and also began bedding plant trials, knowing that these were two kinds of plants that the public would be interested in and would come to see. Each successive year he added to the size of these gardens until the roses took over the entire area,

and the bedding plants were moved to the area east of the Ione Burden Conference Center. With the cooperation of the Jackson and Perkins Rose Company, Burden received new varieties of roses to evaluate for disease resistance, bloom, and growth habit. In 2007 the rose garden was designated as an “All-America Rose Display Garden” (Meadows, 11).

Meadows was also instrumental in working with Steele Burden to have LSU meet its responsibility for maintaining the buildings that existed on the property at the time of the donation. Burden was so discouraged about the deteriorating condition of both the Hostler’s House and the Windrush House that he had considered tearing both of them down. Meadows got Burden to agree to the notion that the Hostler’s House would be made available as an office for retired Agricultural Center chancellors, and then procured funding from the university for the necessary rehabilitation of the structure. Burden oversaw the work himself (Meadows, 8-10).

Meadows’ ultimate challenge was to convince Steele Burden to give permission for the Ag Center to build a new building that could be used both as administrative offices as well as a conference center with catering kitchen. He knew that Burden was opposed to almost any new building and that he didn’t want to see the property “covered up with buildings” (Meadows, 12). A site would have to be selected for the structure where it would be virtually unnoticed, and certainly it could not require the removal of mature trees. Apparently, Burden had been impressed with Meadows’ efforts to improve the public’s impression of the Burden property by the addition of the rose garden and bedding plants trial gardens, so that the approach drive for the Rural Life Museum visitors had been greatly improved. Eventually, after Meadows’ gentle questioning concerning possible locations for the facility, Burden surprised Meadows one day by offering a location—the place where the conference building stands today. It was between two rows of cypress trees, and there were five or six pines in the middle of the rows which Steele said he would allow to be removed. So the building was begun, but while under construction, Ione Burden died. Meadows requested that it be named in her honor, and the request was granted. Burden then offered to design the landscape treatment for the conference center (Meadows, 11-13). These examples illustrate how intimately involved Steele Burden continued to be in the shaping of the landscape of the entire Burden Center during his lifetime. Indeed, during the best of times,

there was a true collaboration between the decision-makers at the Agricultural Center and Ione and Steele Burden.

### *Steele's Last Years*

After his retirement, and with curators handling the day-to-day operations of the museum, Burden had time to tackle other projects, as well as to spend more time with his sculpture and painting. One project that he undertook was the creation of a bird sanctuary on a peninsula in the University Lake on East Lakeshore Drive, along with Frances Monroe and Malcolm Tucker. He had been eyeing the piece of university property for years, feeling that it was perfectly suited for the purpose, and he was finally able to have the current president move the two horses that were being kept there, in order to selectively clear the land, and replant it with species appropriate for attracting birds, both local and migratory. He also sloped the banks of the lake to allow waterfowl access to the promontory. Soon white pelicans began visiting the University Lakes during their winter migration, creating a beautiful spectacle never seen in the city in recent memory.



**AVI film of Steele Burden expressing his desires for the Burden Center and its future. (Control+Click to follow link and watch video with sound. Running time is approximately 33 minutes.)**

In 1989 the Windrush Natural Area was established and registered with the Louisiana Nature Conservancy and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. This woodland, adjacent to the east-bound lanes of Interstate 10 was one of the best old growth bottomland hardwood forests in the state.

Sadly, Steele would be the only one of the three Burden siblings to live to see the final fifty acres of Windrush donated to the university in 1992. Ione died in 1983, and was buried in the churchyard adjacent to the small church that is part of the exhibits at the Rural Life Museum. Steele had, by this time, moved himself into the Ollie Steele Burden Manor, but still spent most of his time during the day at the museum and in his studio in Windrush Gardens, only returning to the Manor to sleep and for meals. In 1994 David Floyd took over the daily operation of the museum. That same year, Floyd conducted a videotaped interview of Steele in order to record his wishes for the treatment of the property in the future. Burden's specific requests are reviewed later in this document, but the interview was timely, for Burden died the following year at the age of 95. His life was celebrated by his closest friends at a memorial ceremony in the Rural Life churchyard where his ashes were buried beneath a tree.

#### *The Burden Center without the Burdens*

In addition to the death of the last member of the Burden family at Windrush, the year 1995 also marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the museum. After Steele's death, the official name of the museum portion of the complex was changed to the LSU Rural Life Museum and Windrush Gardens (Phillips, 14). In 1997, in recognition of the fact that continued operation of the museum would require much more support than LSU could provide, and indeed seeing the future that all museums are currently experiencing, David Floyd approached the John Monroes about forming a friends group, and they chose the first board of directors that formed the Friends of the LSU Rural Life Museum as a fund-raising and support group (Phillips, 111).

One of the issues that bothered Steele Burden during the last decade or so of his life was that the university had not lived up to its part of the bargain in terms of the management and care of Windrush Gardens. In walking through the gardens, he would point out how the

gravel paths were becoming wider, plantings were being neglected, and invasives were becoming established in planting beds without being removed. The gardens had lost a great deal of their integrity during Steele Burden's lifetime because of the lack of a skilled labor force. At the same time, he would say that the donation had been the best thing for Burden Plantation and Rural Life. After his death, it was painfully obvious that Windrush Gardens would slip away were steps not taken to prevent that from happening. In response to this decline, landscape architecture master's student Tracy Stakely decided to select as his thesis topic, "Steele Burden and Windrush: A Historical Documentation of a Landscape Designer and his Garden." The project included a digital survey recorded in AutoCAD of the plant materials and their locations in the garden at that point in time. This documentation has provided an important benchmark for STA's current study.

In 1998, in commemoration of the life and work of Steele Burden, an orangerie was designed by architect-colleague A. Hays Town, and funded by Burden's closest friends, with a major leadership role taken by Malcolm Tucker. It was located adjacent to the Ione Burden Conference Center, near the Essen Lane entry to the Burden Center. The year 1998 also marked the first "Evening at Windrush," the most lucrative annual fund-raiser of the Friends group. Judy Garland – a member of the Friend's group – was the person most instrumental in originating this event and overseeing its growth and development.

From the initial discussion of the donation of the land to LSU, the program element of walking trails had been included, and yet these had never been fully developed. In 2000, a collaborative project of the Burden Research Center, the Baton Rouge Junior League, and Baton Rouge Green was undertaken in order to make this dream of Burden's a reality. The beginning of the trail was chosen at a point behind the Ione Burden Conference Center, and a limestone path was designed to wind its way through the bottomland hardwood forest, focusing on the identification of the major trees along the trail system. The project was severely delayed by Hurricane Gustav, but finally in 2009, *Trees and Trails* opened to the public.

Under the energetic leadership of David Floyd, the collection of building types accelerated, and several major acquisitions were added to Rural Life including a dog-trot barn (1999), a Carolina cabin (2000), a pre-Civil War era wooden jail, an Acadian split-

cypress barn, and a post office (all 2002), a pigeonnier (2003), and one of the oldest Acadian dwellings in the state (2005) (Phillips, 85-103 *passim*).

In the intervening years, many local organizations have developed a strong presence at the Rural Life Museum and the LSU Agricultural Research Center. Among these are the East Baton Rouge Master Gardeners, Baton Rouge Camellia Society, Baton Rouge Bonsai Society, Baton Rouge Hibiscus Society, Baton Rouge Herb Society, and the Baton Rouge Rose Society. These multiple organizations have expressed the desire and created the need for more “public” space in the gardens, which was one of the driving forces for the development of a new master plan.

#### *An era of many plans*

During Steele Burden’s lifetime, all master planning decisions for the Windrush land occupied by the Rural Life Museum and the Windrush House and Gardens had essentially been made by Burden himself. He had a natural affinity for land-planning; it was the land where he had grown up, and he’d spent decades getting to know the landscape and thinking about its potential uses. Even with the land controlled by the Agricultural Center, Burden was involved with the decision-making when major changes were anticipated, and his input was a part of the process. Without Burden to guide the decision-making, there was a tremendous void, and at the same time, pressures to expand and to change the landscape.

First, Rural Life determined that it needed a programmatic master plan that would define what additional building types they desired to complete the architectural collection, where the ideal locations of those buildings would be, and what the projected needs of the museum were for the foreseeable future, given the additional exhibits, increased visitorship, and improvement and restoration of Windrush Gardens. A physical master plan for the campus of Rural Life was developed that included new amenities such as a visitor’s center, outdoor orientation spaces and a new entry to Windrush Gardens, expanded and improved parking, and more direct vehicular circulation. The new plan required some additional acreage that was owned by the Monroes; the agreement was made that the family would donate this land to connect Windrush Gardens to the new visitor center.

The specter of new facilities and site planning meant that there would be the challenge of coordinating between the various entities co-existing at Burden; the three entities are the LSU Ag Center, Rural Life (which administratively is responsible to the LSU Chancellor), and the adjoining private property of the Monroe family. Soon there was the recognition on the part of the LSU administration that there was a need to have a representative governing body to address these entities, and to create a bridge between LSU and the daily operations of the Rural Life Museum. In response to this need for coordination, the LSU Board of Trustees for the Rural Life Museum was created in 2000.

Around this time, Dr. Pat Hegwood was installed as director of Center, and remained in that capacity until 2010. The plant collections at Burden were increased in 2002 by a donation to the Burden Center. The Violet and Henry Stone Camellia Collection, a world-class group of 500 named varieties and 200-300 unnamed camellias were transplanted from the Stone's residential garden in Mid-City to the Burden property, and placed in the understory of the mature pine and oak trees that line the entry road leading from Essen Lane into the agricultural test plot portion of the property. While the addition of these mature shrubs has significantly changed the simplicity of the entrance drive's character, the collection was considered important enough to make the concession of changing the character of the roadway.

The decision to bring the Stone Camellia Collection to Burden and the process that was used to determine its location pointed up the issue that continued to face the Burden Center—the lack of a comprehensive master plan for the property that would not only take into consideration the aspirations of both the Rural Life Museum and the Agricultural Center, but that would also protect and preserve the legacy of the landscape that had been created by the Burden family's residency upon the landscape over time, particularly the design imprint of Steele Burden. Without this, decisions would continue to be opportunistic and uncoordinated, and might prevent more strategic and long-range goals from being met. The Agricultural Center, the Burden Horticultural Society, and the Monroes took the leadership to initiate such a process—an overall master plan for the entire Burden Center that would be comprehensive in nature, coordinating the needs of Rural Life, the Ag Center, and the Monroe Family. The Monroes once again were a driving force for the master plan and the

development of this Cultural Landscape Report. Their concern for the overall property has been a continuing and overarching contribution for more decades. Although most of the internal decision-making for Rural Life was already locked in place by construction that was underway on the visitors' center, the chancellors of both the Ag Center and the University accepted the idea that the plan was long overdue, and the master planning exercise took place. This study is a component of the master plan.

## SEVEN: Evaluating Significance

Cultural landscapes are created through quite different processes than designed buildings, and many designed landscapes, for that matter. In the case of a primarily agricultural landscape, the process of the landscape's evolution is usually one of gradual change over time as necessitated by improvements in farming technologies or changes in local economies. In the case of Burden, that evolutionary process was in action for almost a century before the Burden family moved onto the land. The process of cultural landscape-making has sometimes been likened to the process of layering that occurs in geologic deposition; the resultant landscape has been compared to a palimpsest, a manuscript that has been overwritten, and yet with earlier text still visible through more recent layers.

Though a landscape such as Burden is the result of several generations of occupation and a fairly significant shift in the land's ownership from private hands to that of a major educational and research institution, the standards for evaluating significance for cultural landscapes are the same as those used for a single building designed by an architect or master builder, or a garden built at a single moment in time. Significance, generally speaking, refers to "the meaning or value ascribed to a structure, landscape, object, or site" (Robert Page, et. al., 137).

The significance of the landscape of the Burden Center will be examined based upon the National Register Criteria (*National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 1995), and as defined by the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, even though the "fit" of these criteria is less than ideal. The rule in determining significance for any cultural resource, including cultural landscapes, is the criteria that a property must possess significance in at least one of the four aspects of cultural heritage:

- A. Properties associated with events that have made significant contributions to the broad patterns of history;
- B. Properties associated with the lives of persons significant in the past;
- C. Properties embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction possessing high artistic values, or representing a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;
- D. Properties that have yielded or are likely to yield information important to prehistory or history ("National Register Bulletin," 15).

**Applying National Register Criteria to the Burden Center: Criterion A**

*Properties associated with events that have made significant contributions to the broad patterns of history.*

The broadest pattern of history that shaped the region surrounding the city of Baton Rouge was that of agriculture. The location of the land on the banks of the Mississippi River, the resultant fertility of its soils, its advantage for transportation to market prior to the advent of rail, all combined to make the region a center for agricultural production. The practice of agriculture, in turn, shaped the culture and its social and economic institutions throughout the course of the nineteenth century, continuing into the first quarter of the twentieth century. Today very few vestiges of this pervasive agricultural past remain within the city of Baton Rouge.

The Burden property is the largest single land holding remaining within the city limits of Baton Rouge that is still under cultivation. This fact is significant because nearly all of the land surrounding the early urban settlement was initially composed of large and small land holdings, primarily sugar cane plantations and smaller farms. The eventual process of urbanization and suburbanization resulted in the gradual division of large parcels over time, for either residential, commercial, or industrial uses, or for urban infrastructure. The only surviving reminders of the large-scale ante- and post-bellum plantation and yeoman farm culture that characterized this city built on the rich alluvial soils of the Mississippi floodplain are a handful of extant plantation houses, a very few post-bellum farm houses, the interpretive programs at Magnolia Mound Plantation, and the Burden Center with its Rural Life Museum. But only at Burden is agriculture (actually horticulture and agronomy) still practiced in earnest and at a scale at least suggestive of that of the earlier plantation and its tenant farming systems.

The survival of this large agricultural landscape is significant because it retains the characteristic features that typified historical examples of these landscapes—field patterns and divisions, roads, lanes, orchards, drainage ditches, fencerows, windbreaks, wetlands, woodlands, storage areas, equipment sheds, etc. The principles used by today's researchers as they design their test plots for their horticultural and agronomical experiments have not changed significantly from those that governed the layout of the land during its initial settlement and cultivation.

The original Burden House is a good example of the kind of vernacular structure that would have been built as a dwelling on a small plantation or farm. Although it is missing its dependencies, its plain-style, regional architecture, responsive to local climate and materials is an excellent example of local building traditions.

The landscape character is significant because it survives as part of a continuum, with agriculture having remained a viable land use throughout its historic existence. The architectural collection, however, is incomplete, in that the collection of outbuildings that would have accompanied a residential and agricultural endeavor of this scale has not survived. Instead, the architecture of nineteenth century rural Louisiana is represented on site in another format—that of an open-air architectural museum that incorporates examples of outbuildings from other sites in Louisiana, with additional replicas of historic structures in some cases where actual examples could not be obtained.

These kinds of living history, open air museums, are viewed somewhat skeptically by some historic preservationists because they are not “pure,” that is, they remove structures from their original contexts, and place them into a landscape that has been created rather than one that is authentic. In the case of Rural Life, the arrangement of the structures is idealized rather than real, and the scale has been compressed in order to facilitate the pedestrian experience.

On the other hand, the argument can be made that in many cases, had Rural Life not collected the structures, they would have been destroyed or lost through attrition, whereas today they are assured of preservation so that future generations will be able to learn from them as representative examples of the building types which they characterize.

When one considers the total cultural landscape included within the Burden property, there is no question that the site contains an important set of elements that represent a way of life and labor that typified the patterns of history in most of Louisiana, if not most of the South, for the greater part of the nineteenth century, and the early part of the twentieth century. Both in the landscape itself, and more overtly in the exhibits and artifacts of the Rural Life Museum, one can experience the events that marked the major advances in agricultural production in the region, as well as the events in political and social history that changed the patterns of the way people lived in the landscape.

One of the special qualities that distinguishes the Burden Complex is the continuity that exists in the overall use of the land—the fact that cultivation and production have been central to the land’s purpose from its beginning years of development.

**Applying National Register Criteria to the Burden Center: *Criterion B***  
***Properties associated with the lives of persons significant in the past.***

The National Register Bulletin explains that the “persons associated with the property must be individually significant within a historic context” (15). It further explains that although “architects, artisans, artists, and engineers are often represented by their works, which are eligible under Criterion C, [t]heir homes and studios, however, can be eligible for consideration under Criterion B, because these usually are the properties with which they are most personally associated” (15-16). This is certainly the case with Steele Burden and the Burden Center.

Steele Burden is individually significant as a landscape designer within the context of Louisiana. At the time that Burden practiced, he was one of a very few who engaged in the design and construction of both residential and institutional gardens and landscapes. He accomplished a considerable body of built works during his professional career, including very high-profile public landscapes, such as City Park and much of the LSU Campus, as well as the campus of Our Lady of the Lake Hospital and Ollie Steele Burden Nursing Home. His private commissions probably exceed fifty in number, including Parlange Plantation and Poplar Grove Plantation.

He was a pioneer in identifying a plant palette of evergreen materials that flourished in the deep shade of mature Louisiana gardens, and this palette became a standard in residential gardens, imitated by a generation of landscape architects who followed him. But his artistry was distinctive. It is still possible to identify a Steele Burden landscape design by the simplicity and graceful flow of the lines of the overall design, the careful combination of foliage textures, the restraint in the use of accent and focalization.

**Applying National Register Criteria to the Burden Center: Criterion C**  
*Properties embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction possessing high artistic values, or representing a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.*

The design of Windrush Gardens and the rest of the planning, road alignment, and tree and ornamental planting accomplished by Steele Burden beginning around 1921 and continuing until shortly before his death in 1995 is an outstanding example of what can be called *antebellum revival* landscape design. This approach to design celebrates the golden era of garden design that characterized the antebellum period in the South, when planters reached the peak of their wealth and spent extra profits embellishing their homes and gardens. The period during which this approach to design was popular in the South began roughly in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and ran until the onset of modernism in residential design and the rise of suburbanization—the period following the second World War. In places farther north, smaller gardens were being designed in a related style termed *colonial revival*, wherein the formality and symmetry of early colonial gardens of the Eastern Seaboard were adapted for use. But the scale of southern estates of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century called for a style that matched that of the plantation landscapes in grandeur, hence *antebellum revival*.

This style of garden is akin to the gardens of the *country place era* that date from the 1880s to the 1930s and were built by wealthy industrialists along the Eastern Seaboard and in the Midwest. Both kinds of gardens ultimately trace their parentage to the European gardens of the Renaissance, particularly those of Italy, first popularized in Charles Platt's volume *Italian Gardens* (1894), and later Edith Wharton's *Italian Villas and their Gardens* (1903). But the term *antebellum revival* is used to refer to the direct lineage of Steele Burden's ideas about gardens.

Burden's early exposure to garden design came from his work experiences in landscapes dating from the antebellum period, notably the gardens of The Cottage Plantation on the River Road below Baton Rouge. These gardens, mostly remnants of grand gardens surviving beneath the canopies of very large live oaks, were primarily composed of evergreen shrubs and ground covers. They relied upon a palette of plants primarily imported from the Far East during the early part of the nineteenth century, that soon became standards

of the southern garden—crape myrtle, camellias japonica and sasanqua, sweet olive, Japanese magnolia, boxwood, and azalea.

Because of the preponderance of shade in these gardens, they were primarily green gardens, highlighted briefly during spring by the flush of the azalea blooming period, and in winter by the soft camellia blossoms. The gardens that Burden designed behind the family house at Windrush eventually grew into a series of green garden rooms outlined by hedges of boxwood, structured by patterns of gravel footpaths, with sculpture employed as focal points in the various outdoor rooms that connected with each other through the use sequences of axes and cross-axes.

Windrush Gardens is an outstanding example of a design composition that uses the conventions of three-dimensional garden design that have characterized the art of design since the Renaissance. Through a masterful use of a regional plant palette of native and introduced species, Burden has created a sequence of outdoor rooms, each with a distinctive character and focal points – often a sculpture purchased by the designer while travelling abroad. The gardens possess the traits of restraint and simplicity so often associated with great gardens. The quality of the design, its scale, proportions, and materials, ranks it among national examples of outstanding garden design of the period of the first half of the twentieth century.

### **Statement of Significance**

Based upon the analysis of National Register criteria, the landscape of the Burden Center is significant because it is the last surviving example of cultivated land within the city of Baton Rouge that represents the continuity of agricultural production that has shaped the pattern of the history of this region since the eighteenth century; because it contains examples of the vernacular building types associated with that rural agriculture; and because Windrush Gardens, the Rural Life Museum landscape, and much of the major roadway design and its planting are an important example of the work of Louisiana landscape designer Steele Burden. Burden is distinguished as a practitioner of the approach to garden design of the early twentieth century that celebrated the legacy of the great gardens created during the height of the antebellum period in the Deep South.

The period of significance would be that time during which Burden was most actively shaping and planting the landscape of the Burden Center, roughly from the 1930s through the 1960s.

## **EIGHT: Evaluating Integrity**

In order to assess the degree of integrity that the Burden Center possesses, it is necessary to be able to determine how much of the physical fabric that existed during the property's historic period has survived. This question is not as straight-forward when dealing with a cultural landscape with several generations of agricultural use, but in the case of the Burden Center, the story that is significant is that of the development of the landscape into the multi-purpose complex that exists today—an agricultural research center coexisting with a historic house and garden and an open-air vernacular architectural museum. The glue that holds this complex marriage of elements together is the site planning and planting designs of Steele Burden.

For the most part, because it has only been fifteen years since Steele Burden's participation in decision-making, the integrity of the landscape has not been severely compromised. The widening of the bridge near the orangerie is an exception to this, where this seemingly sensitive alteration of only one dimension—road width—totally changed the character of the spatial experience. The construction of the visitors' center at Rural Life involved the loss of one or two live oaks that had graced the previous parking area.

Integrity in the gardens began to decline well before Burden's death. Due to cutbacks in staffing budgets and the lack of skilled laborers, the management of the gardens was not consistent from the time that LSU took over ownership of the gardens. Gradually, the process of change took over, with path widths changing, invasive plants taking hold in the beds, and mature plantings dying out and not being replaced.

But perhaps the most significant blow to the integrity of the gardens was a natural disaster – Hurricane Gustav – on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. This event decimated the mature canopy of oak, spruce pine over portions of the garden, throwing the plantings into full sun after over fifty years of dense shade. Smaller trees like crape myrtle that were planted approximately 80 years ago were also uprooted. Many of these problems are currently being addressed under the leadership of horticulturist Peggy Cox and Dr. Jeff Kuehny, Horticulture Professor and Resident Director at Burden Center.

Overall, there is a great deal of continuity in the landscape from the time that LSU began its use of the property for research. Although different experimental crops are grown,

the same land areas are under cultivation, and the overall appearance and scale of the operation has remained remarkably consistent.

## NINE: Treatment Recommendations

The fact that a master plan has recently been completed implies that there will be deliberate changes made in the landscape. The Cultural Landscape Report's goal is to document the change that has occurred to date, prior to the master plan's decisions about change that will affect the landscape's future. Change at Burden has occurred as a result of changes in technology, changes in family circumstances, changes in the urban context such as the construction of the interstate, changes in ownership, changes in institutional leadership and agendas, changes in management regimes, benign neglect, and cataclysmic natural change, particularly recent hurricanes.

The writers of this report acknowledge the impacts of the current fiscal situation of the nation, the state, and particularly the university. LSU's funding for Burden has been cut, and is likely to remain flat or worse. There is pressure on the Burden Center to become more self-sustaining, and this goal has affected the development of the master plan by Portico. One of the proposals of the master plan is that a Center for Urban Horticulture be developed near a relocated and improved entrance to the Burden Center as a way of attracting more of the regional population. This is one of several programmatic changes that would increase visitation to the facility, impact traffic and parking capacities, and potentially make a difference on the character of the cultural landscape.

It is imperative that before more changes are proposed and discussed, the meanings and intentions of the significant landscape features are fully understood, so that those elements that have defined the character of the Burden landscape for over half a century, are not removed or changed without due consideration. The following recommendations are proposed in order to augment the master planning process and its probable new landscape development away from irreversible decisions that might compromise the integrity of Burden's historic landscape character.

### **Primary recommendation**

The recommended treatment for the overall Burden Center campus is *rehabilitation*; that is, "the process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair,

alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical or cultural values” (“Preservation Brief 36,” 13).

*Discussion:* In order for the Agricultural Center portion of Burden to be revitalized and become a destination for tourists and locals alike, development will have to take place that addresses the needs of visitors. Prior to now, most of the site planning decisions have been made with the needs of researchers and their projects in mind, rather than for serving non-LSU visitors. This will require that visitor services such as a reception area or visitors’ center/ticketing booth/orientation area, restrooms, gift shop, possibly food services be added to the plan. Clear vehicular entranceways to this new facility, including adequate parking, will also have to be added. The challenge will be to locate these features in a way so that none of the significant features nor the important landscape views are impacted; and they will need to be designed so that the overall rural landscape character of the existing Burden Center is maintained.

### **Restoration as a secondary recommendation**

For specific parts of the Burden Center where the landscape design and planting of Steele Burden is still extant and maintains a high degree of integrity, the treatment method of *restoration* is recommended. Restoration allows for “the depiction of a landscape at a particular time in its history by preserving materials from the period of significance and removing materials from other periods.” Specifically, restoration is the preferred treatment for Windrush Gardens; the landscape in the original campus of the Rural Life Museum; and the original roadway sequence leading from Essen Lane to the Rural Life Museum, with secondary lanes to the Barton Arboretum, and to other points in the landscape. The only exception to this would be the actual entrance from Essen Lane. This entrance was the only plausible entry to the site during Burden’s lifetime, but it has never been ideal, given the view of utilities and the necessity of a sharp right angle turn almost immediately upon entering. Should a better entry be negotiated with the state DOTD, it would create an appropriate beginning to the otherwise magnificent sequence designed by Burden. This new entrance should join Burden’s original road as soon as feasible after the visitor has entered the site.

Documentation already exists for the restoration of Windrush Gardens; management of vegetation until the canopy can be restored is the challenge. For the Rural Life Museum plantings, they need to be recorded “as is,” and then a plan developed so that as plantings decline, they are replaced “in kind,” and these replacements need to be tracked as well. The same kind of record-keeping needs to be done for the roadside plantings, and other wayside plantings by Burden that are distinctive and contribute to the character of the period landscape.

**More specific recommendations follow:**

*Agricultural Center Test Plots—Main roadway from bridge to Rural Life Museum*  
Treat this area so that the landscape maintains the look of a working landscape, one that generally suggests (as viewed by the passing tourist in a car) the conditions that would have been seen in the rural landscape of Louisiana farmland.

- In the video interview of Steele Burden, he suggests that the landscape from Essen Lane to the bridge (just beyond the Orangerie) is open to change, but that from the bridge on, moving through the fields and towards the Rural Life Museum, he would prefer that the landscape not be changed. This is certainly not a directive that cannot be challenged, but it does suggest what the donor’s priorities were, and which portions of the landscape its original planner considered to be “character-defining.”
- Roads and tree plantings along roadways that were designed by Steele Burden should be preserved as much as possible. According to George Raby, the dwarf yaupon hollies planted at the base of so many of the trees along the roadways were initially placed to protect the young trees until they were established so that they would not be damaged by mowing. Burden never intended, according to Raby, for those shrubs to remain around the bases of the mature trees, and they should now be removed.
- As the Ag Center plans its trials and plantings, plant as many of the fields that abut the roadways used by the visitors with food and fruit crops to reinforce the narrative of lifestyle in rural Louisiana, when growing food crops was a part of most people’s lives. Burden specifically mentions sugar cane and cotton.

### *Windrush Gardens and Rural Life Museum*

Using historic photographs and oral histories and interviews, restore the gardens and landscape of the original Rural Life area to the condition that it was in, as Steele Burden's plantings reached their peak, approximately in the 1960s.

- With the limited resources available in terms of labor, the emphasis in Windrush Gardens should be placed upon the health and management of the surviving historic plantings and the replacement of those in decline or already lost, rather than on the addition of short-lived annuals or perennials that were not part of the original garden.
- The tree canopy of Windrush Gardens should be restored by replanting and systematic management so that understory plantings can eventually be replanted, returning the formal garden rooms to the shady, primarily evergreen character that characterized them during Burden's lifetime, and that is such a signature element of Burden's planting designs.
- Restore the crisp outlines of the formal garden rooms using the oblique aerial photographs taken by Pike Burden (see figures x, xx).
- Using the historic photographs of Windrush Gardens as documentation, restore the pathways to their original widths.

### *Barton Memorial Arboretum*

- Consider the possibility of continuing the development of a tree collection at the arboretum. Perhaps the engagement of the forestry program at LSU would help develop an inventory and survey of the species already planted, and those that could be added.
- Develop a program for the general public that draws attention to the potential of the arboretum as a teaching tool for youth and adults, including master gardeners and junior master gardeners.
- Develop a long-range plan that will unify all the signage at the Burden Center, so that the interpretive signage at the arboretum does not look so temporary and outmoded.

### *Woodlands*

- Establish a program of woodlands management that provides for periodic removal and replanting of mature or declining hardwoods. This could include the retention of an arborist on contract or staff to assess the condition of the forest canopy.
- As re-planting occurs, map new species with GPS locations so that record-keeping begins for the purposes of management and future planning.

### *On-site views*

- Develop better screening of new mechanical and storage facilities so that the integrity of the views from within the historic areas of Windrush and Rural Life are not compromised by the intrusion of modern metal structures.
- Provide screening where plant materials have been lost due to natural disaster, disease, or insect attack (for example, the line of pine trees behind the Hostler's House).

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138. Steele Burden sketch image.
139. Painting by Steele Burden, *Trees blowing in breeze*.
140. Steele Burden, sketch image.
141. Steele Burden, photograph of rural vernacular architecture with laundry and cypress picket fence.
142. Steele Burden, photograph of abandoned vernacular Acadian cottage through arched branches/tree trunks.

This list does not include plan of existing conditions, conjectural plan of early Pike Burden gardens, Stakely CAD drawings, nor STA updates to these.

## APPENDIX 1: A Timeline for the LSU Burden Center

*Note:* Entries in small type are provided for overall context, but are not events that relate directly to the evolution of the LSU Burden Center.

- 1780s Baton Rouge begins to take shape as a town under Spanish rule, and by the 1780s, the district of Baton Rouge is a “small but flourishing plantation society” (Carleton, 22).
- 1812 U.S. confirms title to section 41 (land grant) for brothers William and Francis Thomas, first recorded owners of what would become Windrush Plantation.
- 1832 Epidemic of Asiatic cholera kills 16 percent of Baton Rouge population (Carleton, 43).
- 1836 William S. Pike (1820-1875), originally of Kentucky, founds private banking company, Pike, Lapeyre and Brother, with offices in New Orleans and Baton Rouge (Phillips, 20).
- Late 1840s John Charles Burden emigrates from England, leaving ancestral home of Whitney on Windrush River. By 1850s, he has settled in Baton Rouge.
- 1846 Baton Rouge becomes Louisiana’s state capital.
- 1850 William S. Pike is living in Baton Rouge at least by this time (Phillips, 19).
- 1856 John Charles Burden marries Emma Gertrude Barbee, niece of William S. Pike, Sr., early Baton Rouge settler, who would grant use of parcel of land bordering Ward’s Creek in southern part of East Baton Rouge Parish. They are believed to have been the ones who built the summer house at Windrush.
- 1860 Census lists John Charles Burden as merchant (Phillips, 20).
- 1861 William S. Pike, Sr., purchases section 41, site of Windrush Plantation, at sheriff’s sale of the property of William Thomas. Section consisted of 600 acres near Ward’s Creek south of Baton Rouge, all improvements, machinery and farming implements, plus one slave named Nathan, 35 years of age (Phillips, 19).  
William S. Pike, Sr. builds Pike’s Hall on the east side of Third St. between Convention and Florida. Hall used as hospital for sick and wounded during the Civil War, and as quarters for soldiers during battles of Baton Rouge and Port Hudson. Interior of structure not completed until 1866; used as city’s only theater until 1900. Also used as venue for political conventions (Carleton, 99).

- Oliver Brice Steele (O.B. or “Captain” Steele) enlists in Kentucky’s 4<sup>th</sup> infantry which fights in the Battle of Baton Rouge, although Steele is ill and misses the campaign (Phillips, 21).
- 5/1862        United States government reestablishes its authority in Baton Rouge after Federal troops had been forced to surrender without conflict in January, 1861 (Carleton, 84).
- 8/5/1862      Battle of Baton Rouge is fought near intersection of present-day Plank Road and Scenic Highway, on the north, to Clay Cut road near Webb Park Golf Course on the south. These areas were “in the country” beyond the eastern edge of the city. Majority of combat took place near the National Cemetery (Carleton, 91). Civilians flee south along Highland Road and River Road, escaping horror of battle, and begin to pillage farms and plantations along the way. Federal troops downed countless trees for barricades should Confederates return (Carleton, 93).
- 8/ 1862        Claim by John C. Burden for “property taken and damage to house” by United States Army, amount of \$2,897 (American-British Claims Commission, Google Book Search).
- 8/21/1862      Union army leaves Baton Rouge; navy stays. Baton Rouge, “a once beautiful town,” according to one account, was left “with its shade trees felled, its streets lined with debris, and over one-third of its houses burned or wrecked by the troops...” (Carleton, 94).
- 12/17/1862     Union army occupies Baton Rouge with 7,000 troops; troops remain until the end of Reconstruction, April, 1877 (Carleton, 94).
- 4/1863        Claim by John C. Burden for “destruction of house” by United States Army, amount of \$2,700 (American-British Claims Commission, Google Book Search).
- 1870            After the war, O.B. Steele moves to Louisiana, where he meets Joliet Mattie Parks, and marries her in 1870. One of their daughters is Ollie Steele. Census lists John Charles Burden as farmer (Phillips, 20).
- 1870            After Pineville Seminary of Learning burns, the Louisiana State University established by legislative act; in 1877 it absorbs State Agricultural and Mechanical College, New Orleans. David French Boyd leads university through turbulent 1870s (Carleton, 105).
- 1870s          Prolonged national recession (Carleton, 129).
- 1872            John Charles Burden dies at age of 38; owns 5 mules, 15 cows and heifers, 38 acres of sugar cane, 8 bales of cotton, and 250 bushels of corn (Phillips, 21). William S. Pike marries Mary Ann Huguet (Phillips, 20).
- 1877            Reconstruction ends and Union troops withdraw from occupation of Baton Rouge (Carleton, 94).

- 1880s Steele family arrives in Baton Rouge (Phillips, 21).
- 1880 Population of the city is only 7,197 (Carleton, 117).
- 1882 State officials move capital upriver from New Orleans permanently to Baton Rouge (Carleton, 100).
- 1883 Railroad connections established between Baton Rouge and New Orleans (Carleton, 128).
- 1884 O. B. Steele elected state auditor (Phillips, 22).
- 1885 Steele family settles in Baton Rouge (Phillips, 26).
- 1887 City Council authorizes construction and operation of waterworks for the city, including 6 miles of mains, water tower, and fire hydrants. Although river water initially used, it was soon replaced with water from artesian wells (Carleton, 130).
- 1888 O. B. Steele re-elected state auditor (Phillips, 22).
- 1890 Ronaldson and Puckett Dixie Ginnery equipped with Munger Improved Cotton Machine opens on Florida Street, touted as most complete gin in Louisiana (Carleton, 137).
- 1892 O. B. Steele elected state treasurer (Phillips, 22).
- 1893 Municipal streetcar line encircles town of Baton Rouge (Carleton, 132). National economic depression begins (Carleton, 136).
- 1895 William S. Pike Burden, Sr., youngest son of John Charles and Emma Burden, marries Ollie Brice Steele, oldest child of O. B. and Juliet Steele. They have three children—Ione, Pike, and Steele. The senior Burden was an LSU graduate, and ran a grocery and dry goods business. Elected city auditor/treasurer after 1895 and held office until his death (Phillips, 23-24).
- 1896 Ione Easter Burden is born.
- 1897 Quarantine camps set up at roads entering Baton Rouge as result of outbreak of yellow fever. This was one of at least five different yellow fever outbreaks in the city during the last half of the nineteenth century (Carleton, 126).
- 1898 William Pike Burden, Jr., is born.
- 1899 New mayor Robert A. Hart, together with group of progressive citizens, approve bond issues for municipal improvements, including new city hall, street paving, Convention Street School construction, drainage and sewerage projects, a black public school, a city abattoir, and the purchase of a site for a hospital (Carleton, 132).
- 1900 Steele Burden is born.

- Of 68 sugar cane growers and sugar manufacturers in East Baton Rouge Parish, 44 have Baton Rouge as mailing address, attesting to the amount of agriculture being practiced within the city at turn of the century (Carleton, 139).  
 Pike's Hall demolished and replaced by Elk's Theater (Carleton, 139).
- 1905 Mary Huggett Pike dies. William S. Pike Burden, Sr., acquires title to Windrush Plantation (Phillips, 25).
- 1905 Last major threat of yellow fever in Baton Rouge (Carleton, 139).
- 1909 John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil of New Jersey decides to locate in Baton Rouge; Standard Oil Company of Louisiana chartered. The amount injected into the city's economy in construction wages alone amounted to 2/3 of monetary value of parish's cotton crop for 199 (Carleton, 156-7).
- 1913-1917 Ione Burden attends LSU and graduates with degree in English (Phillips, 33).
- 1916-1919 World War I – Pike Burden learns to fly (Phillips, 28).
- 1917 Ione Burden works for LSU as assistant registrar until 1926, then moves to Ruston to work at Louisiana Tech, and then to Williamsburg, VA, to work at William and Mary before returning to Baton Rouge to live at Windrush and work at LSU in 1933 (Phillips, 14-15, 33).
- 1917-1919 Steele Burden studies forestry at LSU. (According to Phillips, dates are 1915-1916.)  
 Steele Burden joins Student Army Training Corps at LSU, because he was not old enough to volunteer for service (Phillips, 43).
- 1919 Louisiana plans planting of 440 miles of "victory oaks" and "other suitable trees along Jefferson Highway, the State's principal road which runs from north to south and connects with the highway that extends all the way on to Winnipeg, Canada." Planting in memory of those who died in war; trees to be planted about forty feet apart ("Memorial Trees for Louisiana Highways, "*Municipal Record*, v. XII, n. 1., 27).  
 Baton Rouge citizens pass bond issue for \$100,000 for improvements to Victory Park downtown (Plan Baton Rouge, 2004).
- 1921 Burden family moves from house in town to summer house—Windrush--on 500 acres.  
 "Ollie Brice Steele Burden and her youngest son, Steele, established the Windrush Gardens," landscaping the grounds of the Windrush House, and incorporating sculpture that Steele had collected on trips to Europe and South America to transform ten acres (Phillips, 14).
- 1921 Victory Park dedicated (Phillips, 51).

- 1922 Ione Burden's first passport records trip to England, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, France, Holland, and Germany (Phillips, 36).
- 1923 Jeannette Monroe marries William Pike Burden, Jr. They build small house at Windrush Plantation across from original Burden house.
- 1924 American Park Builders, group of landscape architects from Chicago, is hired by City of Baton Rouge to oversee development of City Park. Steele Burden works as apprentice under landscape architect Cyfreud for "a couple of years." Firm also designed Victory Park, Roselawn Cemetery, and a small park near Reymond Avenue (Phillips, 50).
- 1925 William Pike Burden, Sr., dies; his mother raises cattle and has 8-10 tenants. Some agricultural activities take place under guidance of LSU's professor John Gray, early authority on soybean research. These experiments located near present entrance on Essen Lane.  
 Burden family permits other departments in LSU's College of Agriculture to conduct research projects on the plantation, establishing the relationship that would lead to the development of the LSU Agricultural Center's Burden Research Center.  
 George Raby is born at Highland Plantation north of St. Francisville.  
 Dr. Lester James, husband of Ollie's sister Mayme, becomes father figure of sorts to the Burden family. He was chief of staff at Our Lady of the Lake Hospital from 1927-1946 (Phillips, 25).
- 1925-1930 Steele Burden takes a job with the Baton Rouge City Parks Department (Phillips, 51). He works at City Park; plants all trees.
- 1926 Steele Burden constructs brick garden house behind Windrush House to serve as his art studio (Phillips, 45).
- 1926 Formal dedication of Louisiana State University campus at present location south of downtown (Carleton, 176).
- 1926-1929 Ione Burden works as registrar of Louisiana Tech (FP).
- 1928 Huey Long elected Governor of Louisiana.
- 1929 Crash of American stock market.
- 1929 Steele Burden in Paris for meeting of American Legion.
- 1929-1932 Ione Burden works as secretary to the dean of the College of William and Mary (Phillips, 33). The Rockefeller Foundation's work to restore Colonial Williamsburg is well underway when Ione arrives, and during her time in the

town, she witnesses the transformation and preservation of the colonial settlement and the creation of period gardens for the restored buildings.

- 1930      LSU professor James Broussard (later Dean of Men) asks Burden to help landscape the new LSU campus. Burden refuses to take job full-time, as he still has work to do at City Park, and has promised to do private work for area homeowners (Phillips, 53).
- 1930s     Steele Burden begins second formal garden at Windrush, near the first and behind the house (Phillips, 47).
- 1930s     Steele Burden designs a formal rose garden in front of Hart House behind Magnolia Mound Plantation.
- Late 1930s   Raby family moves from Highland Plantation, to St. Francisville.
- 1931-1970   Steele Burden works at LSU.
- 1933-1961   Ione Burden works for LSU, as assistant to dean of student affairs, and later as director of student activities (Phillips, 33).
- c. 1934     After struggling to pay property taxes on Windrush Plantation, Miss Ollie divides 22 acres of the property among her three children, giving Ione the tract where Windrush house and gardens are now located; Pike, Jr., a tract on which, in 1941, he and his wife Jeannette would build what today is the Monroe residence; and Steele, a portion that contained heavily planted piney woods where the garden's lakes are now located, and that became part of the Rural Life Museum and Windrush Gardens (Phillips, 15).
- 1935     Huey Long assassinated.
- 1938     Burden purchases French Quarter house on Dauphine Street (built c. 1822), restores building making three apartments and personal studio and large garden courtyard (Phillips, 61).
- 1940     Pike and Jeannette Burden move small house to rear of property; build West Indies style house which is now home of John and Frances Monroe.
- 1940     First bridge crossing Mississippi River at Baton Rouge is completed (Carleton, 174).
- 1940     Hundreds of subdivisions begin to be developed, shifting center of population from downtown to suburbs (Carleton, 195-196).
- 1941-1945   World War II.

- Early 1940s George Raby hired at Pike Burden's Print Shop; works there for 40 years. Steele Burden begins to develop larger area south of original garden as oval garden rooms surrounded by shrub beds (Phillips, 48).
- 1940s Steele Burden begins making clay sculptures.
- 1940s State of Louisiana is transformed from one with rural population base to an urban majority (54.3%) 10 years later (Carleton, 196).
- 1942 Steele Burden volunteers for World War II effort; 84<sup>th</sup> engineering battalion. Stationed at Camp Livingston near Alexandria for 18 months (Phillips, 43).
- 1943-1945 Frances Parkinson Keyes occupies and restores the Cottage Plantation on River Road and employs Steele Burden to create a garden beneath the existing live oaks, including Cherokee roses and white wisteria. (House struck by lightning and burns in 1960.) (Phillips, 60)
- 1945 At end of World War II, Steele Burden goes to work for LSU full-time, continuing until his retirement in 1970 (Phillips, 53).
- Late 1940s George Raby plants oak alley along Burden Lane.
- 1944-1970 Keyes spends winters in New Orleans Beauregard House. Burden assists with restoration of walled parterre garden and stays in carriage house for five years during the process (Phillips, 60-61).
- 1948 Ione Burden is promoted to director of student activities (Phillips, 34).
- 1950 Ione Burden appointed as chairman of the University Publications Committee at LSU (Phillips, 34). In August, Steele Burden writes to sister Ione who is in the Blue Ridge Mountains, that he "finally had a yard man, Albert Raby" (Phillips, 36).
- 1951 Steele Burden sails to South America aboard Marion Lykes.
- 1957 Ione Burden suffers a heart attack (Phillips, 35).
- 1958 Mrs. Ollie Burden dies at the age of 87.
- 1960 Pike and Jeannette, Ione, and Steele explore idea of donating Windrush Plantation to the state (Phillips, 39).
- 1960-61 Pike Burden receives Golden Deeds Award (Phillips, 32).

- 1961 Ione Burden retires from LSU as director of student activities at age 65 (Phillips, 33).
- 1961 Burden Foundation is established as vehicle to make donations of property.
- 1963 Establishment of the Foundation for Historical Louisiana (Carleton, 214).
- 1964 Ground broken for Ollie Steele Burden Manor, thirty-acre nursing home named in honor of the three Burden siblings' mother.  
Burdens explore possibility of giving Windrush to LSU, defining what uses would and would not be permitted (Phillips, 39).
- 1965 William Pike Burden, Jr., dies.  
Increased suburbanization, abandonment of downtown as retail center, results in shifting center of population eastward where shoppers are served by Bon Marche and Cortana Malls (Carleton, 196).
- 1966 First donation of fifty acres of Burden Research Plantation land to LSU, with agreement to add to this annually until entire 450-acres transferred.
- 1967 First public announcement of Rural Life Museum in *Sunday Advocate* on April 23, citing that LSU would preserve garden areas, public museum would be developed depicting Louisiana rural life, along with five-mile walking trail around the 150-acres of woodland and man-made lakes (Phillips, 67).
- Late 1960s George Raby and his wife Viola move off Burden property so that their nine children can go to school conveniently.  
Thirty acres are sold to federal government for passage of I-10 through property.
- 1970 Steele Burden retires from LSU and spends next two decades continuing to develop Windrush Gardens (Phillips, 48).  
Jeannette Burden dies and leaves house to John and Bill Monroe. Several years later they perform title transfers to establish title in fee simple to John Monroe (Communication with John Monroe).  
Steele Burden starts Rural Life Museum. Metal-roofed storage building is constructed to house university's collection of folk art, antique tools, and other nineteenth century cultural artifacts, along with Burden's collection of artifacts (Phillips, 55). Burden moves six historical buildings to Windrush Plantation from Welham Plantation (Phillips, 17). Complex divided into two sections: Plantation and Upland South.  
1880 cane grinder purchased for display at Rural Life (Phillips, 76).
- 1971 First open house held at Rural Life Museum (Phillips, 105).

- Overseer's house and addition used as school house, and double-pen slave cabin moved from Welham Plantation to Rural Life. Cabin adapted as blacksmith's shop for museum interpretation (Phillips, 83).
- 1972      Site of Burden family home including Windrush Gardens donated to LSU, with provision that family would continue to remain in home as long as they desired.  
 Mike Jones is hired as first employee and curator of Rural Life Museum (Phillips, 55).  
 Replica sugar house built at Rural Life, based on drawings of historic sugar houses (Phillips, 75).  
 Additional buildings from Welham Plantation moved to Rural Life Museum including double-pen slave cabin, sick house and commissary (Phillips, 83). Pioneer cabin and corn crib moved to Rural Life from Washington Parish (Phillips, 93).  
 Animal-driven sugar cane crusher from Southdowns Sugar donated to Rural Life (Phillips, 67).
- 1973      African-American church from College Point, St. James Parish, near Welham Plantation, moved to Rural Life (Phillips, 87).  
 Building interpreted as smokehouse, originally a 1930s railroad depot, moved to Rural Life (Phillips, 102).
- 1974      John Dutton becomes second curator of Rural Life Museum (Phillips, 55).
- 1975      Sculpture by Hans Schuler, c. 1926, former director of Maryland Institute of Art, of African-American man tipping his hat, donated to Rural Life. The piece is located at the entry circle outside the museum visitor parking lot until 2010 when it is moved inside the museum proper (Phillips, 88-90).  
 Replica of Acadian House constructed at Rural Life (Phillips, 101).
- 1976      Shotgun house from Augusta Plantation in Bayou Goula area of Iberville Parish donated to Rural Life, interpreted as late nineteenth century plantation office (Phillips, 97).
- 1978      Our Lady of the Lake Hospital moves from north of the State Capitol on Capitol Lake to Essen Lane adjacent to Burden property.
- 1979      Dr. Warren Meadows is appointed resident Director of Burden Research Center, responsible for portion of property used for agricultural research purposes. Holds position until 2000. Meadows succeeded Dr. Louis Anzalone, first director, whose office had been in Hostler's House. Meadows' first office is metal building next to equipment sheds (Meadows, 1, 6).  
 Small glass greenhouse under construction at Burden Research Center (Meadows, 5).

- John Dutton locates example of dogtrot house west of Alexandria in Rapides Parish, and moves it to Rural Life (Phillips, 95).
- c. 1979      Burden creates bird sanctuary on peninsula in University Lake on East Lakeshore Drive. White pelicans begin visiting Baton Rouge in the winter.
- 1980      Dr. Meadows starts rose variety planting beds and bedding plant trials where today's rose garden is (Meadows, 11).
- 1982      C. 1840 single pen slave cabin from Tyron Plantation in Rapides Parish is moved to the Rural Life Museum. The structure is displayed in unfinished state so that construction features can be shown (Phillips, 76).
- 1983      Ione Burden dies and is interred in Rural Life Churchyard (Phillips, 90).
- 1983-1984      Ione Burden Conference Center constructed, including offices for resident director of Burden Center, and meeting space and catering kitchen. Landscape designed by Steele Burden (Meadows, 12-13).
- 1989      Windrush Natural Area, with one of best old growth bottomland hardwood forests in the state, is established and registered with the Louisiana Nature Conservancy and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.
- 1991      Scott Duchein Barton, one of the original members of the Burden Foundation, dies. Steele Burden proposes that the arboretum at Burden be named in her honor.
- 1992      Burden Family donates final 50 acres of Windrush Plantation to LSU (Phillips, 17).
- 1993      Suzanne Turner conducts oral history interview with Steele Burden (Phillips, 51).
- 1994      David Floyd takes over day-to-day operation of museum as executive director. David Floyd interviews Steele Burden on videotape regarding Steele's wishes for the treatment of the Burden property in the future.  
Kathryn Grigsby interviews Steele Burden for LSU oral history center (Phillips, 24).
- 1995      Steele Burden dies.  
Summer house opens to public for first time. Complex is named Rural Life Museum and Windrush Gardens.  
Twenty-fifth anniversary of the museum is celebrated (Phillips, 111).

1997	<p>David Floyd, John and Frances Monroe form Friends of the LSU Rural Life Museum (Per John Monroe).</p> <p>Copy of large beehive oven like those used by Acadians is constructed at Rural Life (Phillips, 102).</p> <p>Landscape architecture masters student Tracy Stakely writes thesis, “Steele Burden and Windrush: A Historical Documentation of a Landscape Designer and his Garden.”</p>
1998	<p>Orangerie, donated by close friends and designed by A. Hays Town as a memorial to Steele Burden’s contributions to Baton Rouge and Louisiana, is dedicated.</p> <p>First “Evening at Windrush” fundraiser is held (Phillips, 111).</p>
1999	<p>Donation of dog-trot barn from Bayou Honda in Sabine Parish to Rural Life by Stoker family (Phillips, 96).</p>
2000	<p>Establishment of LSU Board of Trustees for the Rural Life Museum (Phillips, 111).</p> <p>Burden Research Center, Junior League, and Baton Rouge Green work to fulfill Burden’s dream of trail system through forest beginning behind Ione Burden Conference Center—Trees and Trails (Phillips, 64).</p> <p>Donation of Carolina cabin from Stoney Point on Greenwell Springs Road to Rural Life (Phillips, 94).</p>
2002	<p>Donation to Rural Life of structure from Oak Ridge in Morehouse Parish, believed to be only surviving pre-Civil War era wooden jail in Louisiana (Phillips, 97).</p> <p>Acadian split-cypress barn from Port Barré area of St. Landry Parish moved to Rural Life from Orange Grove Store in Point Coupee where it had previously been moved (Phillips, 101).</p> <p>Post office, originally Colomb Post Office from site of Webre Plantation, in St. James Parish, moved to Rural Life (Phillips, 103).</p> <p>Violet Stone Camellia Collection, consisting of 500 named varieties and 200-300 unnamed varieties, moved to Burden Center.</p>
2003	Pigeonnier built in 1892 is donated to Rural Life (Phillips, 85).
2005	<p>One of oldest surviving Acadian dwellings in the state, from Bayou Lafourche near Labadieville, is moved to Rural Life (Phillips, 101).</p> <p>Zapp’s International Beerfest fundraiser is held at Rural Life for the first time (Phillips, 111).</p> <p>LSU Agricultural Center renovates All-American Rose Garden and it is made member of national All-American Rose Selections (Phillips, 17).</p>

- 2007 Dr. Pat Hegwood, resident director of Burden, installs brick lined beds and other improvements in rose garden (Meadows, 11).
- 2008 Hurricane Gustav decimates hardwood forest at Burden Research Center. First Old Fashioned Easter Celebration is held at Rural Life (Phillips, 111). LSU Agricultural Center begins International Hibiscus Garden (Phillips, 17).
- 2009 Trees and Trails reopens after recovery from Hurricane Gustav, reviving Burden's idea of a trail system to educate children through the use of outdoor classrooms (Phillips, 64-65).
- 2010 New visitor's center opens as result of *Whispers of Change* capital campaign. Facility houses orientation exhibit, changing exhibits, gift shop, and visitor amenities.

## **APPENDIX 2: The Eleven Wishes of Mr. Burden**

With  
Comments by Warren Meadows, Resident Director

During the twenty years which I have been at the station, the central theme concerning its future has been indelibly imprinted upon my thoughts. IN most of my conversations with Mr. Burden – and these were many – he would invariably inject the question – “what is going to happen to this place when we are gone?” The we here referred to himself, Malcolm Tucker and me.

The question was usually followed by his addressing one or more of his “wishes” concerning the property’s future when he was no longer on the scene. My entreaty to him on these occasions was always, “you should write it down”. (I also knew that Malcolm Tucker was telling him the same thing.)

Finally he composed a memorandum to the Burden Foundation dated January 17, 1991 in which he outlined, in rather broad terms, his major concerns and wishes for the future. I was elated that he finally did so, although some of these he changed slightly after they were written and prior to his death. (After David Floyd became director of the museum, he did a video filming of Mr. Burden in which he reiterates these wishes – although Mr. Burden told me that he was very “uncomfortable” with this process. ” )

In its broadest context the itemization of Mr. Burden’s wishes would also be those of Miss Ione – “that a ‘green area’, devoid of superfluous buildings, be maintained in perpetuity for the enjoyment of mankind.”

Ironically, the single largest threat to this legacy is not its current owners, LSU and the LSU Agricultural Center, but highway construction, i.e. I-10 and I-12. The “woodlands” encompassing the property will be the first segment to be destroyed if an effort is not ignited to prevent it. With this prospect the entire “ambience” of the property will be destroyed. I recently previewed a “future” DOTD plan for I-10 which reinforced my fears for this prospect.

Recently, the new Director of DOTD was invited to visit the station to view and discuss our concerns in this respect. After the visit, before departing, he suggested that a committee be appointed to meet with DOTD planning engineers in the development of highway projects affecting the station. Hopefully, this will be an effective exercise.

The following is an itemization of Mr. Burden’s wishes with comments as to their status as of 10/25/99.

- 1) That part of the Plantation that is surrounded by woods (from the rose garden bridge back to the Burden House by Ward's Creed) should be kept free of all buildings exclusive of the Rural Life Museum area.

*Comment:* This is self explanatory except for the fact that the area already also contains "service" buildings for equipment and a small office.

- 2) Every effort should be made to screen from view the hospital and other buildings now visible along the south property line. Screening can best be achieved by planting additional trees on research station property adjacent to the hospital property. This planting should start immediately.

*Comment:* some of these plantings have already been made and will/should be continued. Of particular importance to Mr. Burden was/is the area between the bridge and the service buildings area.

- 3) All efforts must be made to prevent the destruction of trees on the property north of the hospital and now owned by the order of Franciscan Nuns. Attempts should be made to have this property donated to LSU or to acquire a 99-year lease by the University from the Sisters.

*Comment:* Through the efforts of Dr. Paul Murrill and others this property has been donated to the Burden Foundation by the hospital. Mr. Burden feared that the hospital would construct high-rise office buildings on this property, destroying this woodland area near Essen Lane.

- 4) The original design of the Windrush Gardens must be maintained as it is today. The current expansion project will ultimately extend the gardens to include the lake area and the woods surrounding the original gardens and will take in about 25 acres. This new area must be maintained as part of the old gardens.

*Comment:* It is important to understand that Windrush Gardens is composed of two very distinct parts, as alluded to in Mr. Burden's statement. These two parts are:

A. The area of the original design.

B. The expansion portions of the gardens.

Part A, the original Windrush is to be preserved insofar as is possible in its original state – both design-wise and plant-wise. This is being done.

Part B, the expansion gardens were not completed at the time of Mr. Burden's death. The design was completed for three sections of this "part" but planting was not completed. Both design and planting need to be completed for two additional sections of this "part". This is being done.

In summary the "original Windrush Gardens" is to be maintained in its original state. The "expansion areas" are being completed and the plant material in these areas may change over time.

- 5) The purpose of having the Burden House restored is to have the front and rear porches to serve as resting spots for people who are visiting the gardens. The house must be maintained as it is today and is never to be lived in. The Burden House is dedicated to the Memory of William Pike Burden Sr. – Constructed by John Burden, 1856.

*Comment:* This statement is very specific and needs no explanation. The house was renovated by Mr. Burden prior to his death.

- 6) Under no circumstance must the wooded areas ever be destroyed. These areas are registered with the Louisiana Natural Areas Registry Program. Any efforts to destroy any of these areas should be immediately brought to the attention of the Louisiana Nature Conservancy.

The woods on the south side of I-10 should have walking paths serving as nature trails as well as a road system for police patrolling.

*Comment:* This states one of the most fervent wishes of both Miss Ione and Mr. Steele Burden regarding the property. Unfortunately it is the most apt to be abused, not by LSU, but by highway development. The path areas in the woods south of I-10 are mentioned but actually these are path areas in the wood both north and south of I-10. These are currently being maintained.

- 7) The 20 acres of cleared land between I-10 and the Ollie Steele Burden Nursing Home must be used in the very best fashion to enhance the beauty of the Burden Research Plantation. A landscape design plan should be made for, and implemented on, this site. Part of this plan should have the entire area, especially the Essen Lane frontage, planted in such a way as to obscure signs of passing traffic from within the plantation.

The ideal use for this 20-acre site would be to have LSU's Natural Science Museum relocated here.

The ideal use for the 125-acre wooded area between I-10 and Bon Aire Subdivision would be to have a facility constructed at the edge of, or just within, the woods and operated as a retreat for business groups. Such a facility would afford the business community the opportunity to meet in a natural wooded area and escape the hectic

office pace. Too, the exposure of the plantation to such a group of people could one day result in support for various University projects. Also, such a facility would allow the Ione Burden Conference Center to be used exclusively for University purposes. Should University officials deem it appropriate, either or both of the above projects could be accompanied by the construction of a conservatory and green house on the cleared area.

*Comment:* At various times over the past 30 years a number of uses for this property have been considered – the LSU Law School, the LSU Systems Building, the State Archives Building and the Pennington Biomedical Center. Prior to Mr. Burden's death he requested that it be dedicated as the site of a new LSU Art Museum. Mr. Burden was really more interested in a Museum of Natural Sciences and a Conservatory for this property – a wish that he still harbored at the time of his death. Actually the “conservatory wish” provided the background for the construction of the Orangerie, his memorial. Since Mr. Burden's death we have completed the planting of bamboo in the tree line parallel to Essen Lane to totally “screen” Essen from view. It remains to be seen just what effect the proposed widening of Essen Lane will have upon the trees, etc., in this screen.

- 8) The Live Oak avenues must under any circumstance never be destroyed. The avenue running north-south and extending to the borrow pits should be upgraded to serve as the approach to the lake development. Hopefully this lake will soon be a reality.

*Comment:* There are approximately 500 live oaks on the property which were planted by Mr. Burden over the years. The Live Oak Avenues referred to here actually extend from the Essen lane entrance throughout most of the property.

The last of the Oaks were planted on the “turf plot” side of the entrance road. Over time the turf plots should be moved to another location on the property. This is currently being discussed and planned. The “lake development” referred to in this wish is actually the borrow pits area which was donated directly to LSU and the Ag Center by the contractor who built the I-10 and I-12 split and encompasses about 16 acres. For a number of years Mr. Burden harbored a very strong wish that these “borrow pits” be developed into impounded lakes. I was alone in voicing opposition to his proposal, based primarily on practicability and cost. He actually had a cost figure of \$90,000 from the engineers for a series of rudimentary and low sill dams for the project when I asked to meet with him and the engineers to ask a few questions; as follows:

My Question: (1) “How deep will the impounded water be?”

Answer: “5 feet” (5 ft. of water in a 20 ft. deep hole!)

My Question: (2) "What will happen to the earth dams in the first 6-8 inch rain?"

Answer: "They will wash out!"

(The answers devastated Mr. Burden but he later grudgingly thanked me for saving him \$90,000). His hopes for this project diminished with this meeting.)

- 9) Hopefully, too, the plots developed by me will be maintained. These include the area across the road from the rose garden, the two plots at the ends of the live oak avenues, and the circle surrounding the statue of Uncle Jack.  
Maintenance of these plots is in addition to the Windrush Gardens area.

*Comment:* These areas are being maintained and the basic layout will be preserved. The museum is responsible for the maintenance of the Uncle Jack Statue area.

- 10) The lot on Burden Lane should be sold at an appropriate time. The sale's proceeds should be invested with the interest used to supplement, not replace, University funding for future maintenance and development of the Rural Life Museum and adjacent Windrush Gardens.

*Comment:* Self explanatory. Mr. Burden had discussed this possibility with Chancellor Caffey and me on numerous occasions.

- 11) If at any time the University is negligent in maintaining the property the Ione Burden Foundation will take action in accordance with the donation contract.

*Comment:* Self explanatory.

Summary:

Warren Meadows

The preceding is presented as a "Report as of October, 1999" concerning Mr. Burden's overall wishes as transmitted in his memo of January 17, 1991 to the Burden Foundation. On those matters under the jurisdiction of the LSU Ag Center I have tried to adhere to the intents of this memo as closely as possible. Having discussed all of these points with Mr. Burden on many occasions I feel that my interpretation is as valid as I can possibly make it. Change is inevitable and I know that Mr. Burden expected change – but change in the right direction with certain basic premises exempt from change. Sometimes it is difficult to delineate between change and improvement especially where interpretation of the philosophy and vision of an individual are concerned. Interpretation becomes even more elusive when these visions emanate from an individual who was an artisan of considerable breadth and the passage of time slowly dissolves the precise transmittal of these visions.

## **APPENDIX 3: Wishes of Ione and Steele Burden's in regard to the Burden Research Property. (January, 1973)**

The following document is written and taped in January 1973 by Steele Burden expressing the wishes by Ione and Steele Burden in regard to the Burden Research Plantation.

First, the ultimate use of the old family residence built by John C. Burden. The old house originally had a porch across the front with plastered ceiling – Should the university wish to make use of this building as a research library on phases of Louisiana Plantation and rural life- or rooms for small gatherings to say view slides, etc.-the present house as it stands would be inadequate. However by raising the old structure and adding a brick ground floor it could be redesigned to accommodate useful purpose and be made into a more attractive plantation house. Should the above suggestion be impractical as to cost—then the University should replace the old house with a typical plantation home with adequate space for use as stated above. A kitchen originally stood about 30 foot from the back. (scratched through.) A small area for parking 8 or 10 cars could be added by widening the road from present garage shed. The brick garden house and pigeonaire are about the most convenient entrance from the Museum to visit the garden. The Hosteler's cabin, because of its location between museum and garden is ideal for location (at least for the present) of Men and Women's rest rooms, office and keeper's house. Should the existing house not meet the needs with certain renovations – then a new one on same location could be constructed. It should compare in architecture to surroundings.

THE GARDEN: The design as existing today should remain the same and the feeling of an old garden kept. Should the paths become worn they can be covered with an aggregate such as used at Rosedown. The statues should eventually be mounted on unplastered old brick foundations rather than on concrete pipe. There are certain key spots thru out the gardens in which colorful perennials or annuals should be planted as often as necessary. Plants such as Caladiums – Coleus – Sultana – plumbago – aucuba – ardesia, etc., would be a suggestion because of their dependability. The first garden approached from the garden House is subjected to enough sunlight to use this for annuals. It is the one place in which this can be done without radical changes. The live oak trees, of course, will last indefinitely, if properly cared for and if storms do not destroy them. In which instance the same variety should be used for replacements.

The old garden should be extended by adding a walk 15 feet wide through the pine forest leading to Lake Efferson. This walk should be extended from circle with statue of Bacchus. The woodland path should be bordered with azaleas, hydrangeas, aspidistra, ardesia, and all the hardy shade loving plants and should be terminated by an attractive summer house or shelter. We hope the lake (to be known as Efferson Lake) will be made attractive by plantings of semitropicals such Windmill palms, bamboos, the varieties of bananas, livingstonia palms, etc., and such trees as live oaks, cypress, Maple, dogwood, crape myrtle, cow oak, and such trees as will add brilliant fall color to reflect in the water.

Along the perimeter road leading from the Museum and near the lake can be an appropriately designed building to house an exhibit of Indian lore. The university has a fine collection in the Geology Bldg. which the public rarely has the pleasure of seeing. Why not add this to the growing Museum. This would add another phase of Louisiana history.

The wooded area west of the lake thru which the old Ward's Creek meanders can be made into a Woodland Garden and adding another extension of the old garden by bridging Ward's Creek or making a crossover with a ramp. There are a few old trees still existing in this area. These woods should have natural trails running thru out, and the whole planted in azaleas and hardy shade loving plants, groundcover where the trees have been smothered out by vines and etc. Such places should be reforested in Pines, Cypress, Magnolia, live oaks, and maples. Vines should be cut where ever found in any part of all woods. Altho attractive and adding to a jungle-like appearance- Vines are eventual death to trees. The wild garden suggested above will add to background of lake. In appropriate places thru out the lake area there should be blinds from which birds and animals can be observed without the person being seen.

THE MUSEUM: Access to Museum should be from Essen Lane because traffic can be better controlled. Perhaps twice a year there should be an open house for university faculty and their friends. The precise dates for these two special occasions should coincide with the Rose Garden at its peak—that is in Spring and again in the fall or October—I personally don't see how the Museum can be advertised as open to the public. A sad commentary but a fact. It would soon be destroyed by theft and vandalism. Keep it as it is today (January 1973) open to adult groups by request, with children under 12 years of age not allowed and with Saturday and Sunday visits discouraged. To open Essen Blvd. gates on weekends would be inviting the general public—which would necessitate guards thru out the entire plantation.

It will be highly essential if the old structures are to last to be ever alert for termites-roaches-rats, etc.—leaks particularly around chimneys (which are not flashed.) and wood borers or borers or beetles the log house being particularly susceptible to the later. In other words, unless someone is not constantly watching – the museum would not have been worth the effort.

It is now (1973) important to not accept things offered which will not add materially to interest in the museum – unless they are given with the privilege of either trading or selling in which case they would help in maintenance. As time goes on – many of the artifacts should be upgraded as better ones are acquired. There's always the possibility of trading or selling. The furniture and floors in the Overseer's House should be oiled with proper materials at least once a month and the quilts, etc. sunned and treated for moths and insects.

The Overseer's House should have gutters in keeping across front and back. The back doors should have appropriate sheds over them. A smoke house should be constructed close by the kitchen. A stake exists for its location. A plan for a grist mill exists in the files. As of this date—1973—it is the next most important structure to be added. A stake is driven down for its location. The boundaries of cemetery should be outlined with cypress, a few live oaks, and, of course a few cedars. The entire area should be shaded and covered by ground covers such as liriope, monkey grass, and dwarf confederate jasmine. The reason for the assimilated cemetery being to preserve first some of the old wrought iron crosses and other interesting cemetery things now of the past.

The old farm machinery and all artifacts should be kept from rusting and rotting away where exposed to weather until such time as sheds can be provided for their preservation.

Many of these things are now irreplaceable and if not properly taken care of then the effort to establish a Rural Life Museum would have been wasted effort.

The main entrance to the Museum proper should be thru court framed by three metal buildings. Adequate parking from this court to main road running north and south could accommodate parking for possibly 100 cars and would eliminate cluttering within the Museum area. Plans are on file for the additional 2 metal buildings—court and parking area. In the center of proposed court is to be placed a bronze plaque commemorating the Mule for its part played in the economy of the country.

With the completion of the three metal buildings there will be three court areas. The entrance court and one on either end of the center building. The s

The Burden foundation will pay for this entrance court and one on either end of center bldg.

The selection of plants and trees and their arrangement should be most carefully considered.

Such plants and trees should be used as were available say 100 years ago such as the chinaberry trees, Crepe myrtle – live oaks – Cypress, Sweet Olive, magnolia Fuscata – Magnolias, Vidivere [vetiver], Four o'clocks, the old fashioned roses, etc.

Attractive signs should suggest the route to be followed for seeing the scattered layout properly done, such markers would save time and confusion - and not be unsightly.

The road for parking should be lined with alternating chinaberry and live oak trees spaced 50 ft. intervals.

The Church could be used for small gatherings of 25 or 30 people although the old benches are uncomfortable for such uses—chairs could be kept on hand for such occasions.

There have already been requests for a meeting place.

The Lagoon outlined between Sugar House and church should become a quality of its enhancement to the whole project. The old sugar houses always had a pond nearby.

The kitchen as it stands is more or less complete. It would be of interest to some day have a small herb garden on east side after the kitchen, as well as herbs , it could also have a few of the old time plants such as vidivere, etc. The kitchen can be connected to overseer's dining room by walk leading to back door. The smoke house should be located in this area.

A Share Croppers House and appropriate plantings can be an interesting addition to the Museum. It should be located on east side of road or pine grove leading to lake. The house should be two or three room shotgun style & construction-wise corn crib-pig pen-out house or the usual typical structures. There are many such houses still existing and one could be moved in perhaps less expensively than building a new one. This addition would bring the Museum up to what many of us knew and a phase of farm life following Reconstruction to fairly recent times. This should not conflict in any way with the plantation quarters.

A typical Acadian House should be purchased and moved in (or a reconstruction of one) to a location also along road leading to Efferson Lake. One similar to that located in Evangeline Park in St. Martinsville could be a model. The spinning wheel – pirogue – the loom - and many other Acadian artifacts now in Museum could be used to furnish an Acadian House.

The Indian Exhibit before mentioned should be located near one of the 3 mounds to exist on the lake.

The Lowry Bird Exhibit should some day be properly housed in a fine building on the plantation—This indeed could be a dream come true after which the world would beat a path to the Museum.

The circle being at the entrance to Museum and the heart of the plantation and the location of the good Darky statue should always be maintained as attractively as possible—with colorful foliage or perennials especially in circle around statue. Copper plants with plumbago and summer snow Floribunda roses would be an ideal summer combination. The other circle and triangle should be carefully maintained with colorful plants and trees. These two locations will then have some interesting artifact. For instance, the marble columns from the old Hill Memorial Library should be gotten from the Carruth family near Port Allen—and placed (lying down) at one of these points. A bronze marker should forever commemorate the Hill Family for its donation to LSU when that institution was a pauper. Should the University prove of such short memory as to NOT name its present fine library for the Hill family then at least there will be a marker somewhere, to compensate for its lack of gratitude. Should such a bronze marker be cast it should have a replica of Hill Memorial Library as a part of casting. The Burden Foundation will provide funds for this if the old columns can be secured.

The Perimeter Road flanked by woods can be made so attractive that it will be a privilege to walk or drive around it. As the live oaks become crowded – the trees closest should be removed except when ones crowding are too large to be cut or are specimens. When ever possible trees should be planted such as Maple, hickory, ash, tallow, etc., for spectacular fall color. It will add interest to this perimeter drive to cut underbrush 75 to 100 feet back from road – otherwise, ...much of the underbrush should always remain for protection of wildlife or certain areas left entirely undisturbed – except for cutting vines – which ruin and finally kill trees. Vines should all be cut over the entire plantation as time permits or as soon as possible. Where trees have been smothered out or for some reason killed within the existing woods – such places should be reforested using pines extensively or cypress where land permits – an (sic) of course live oaks.

The Trails should be extended and marked attractively and occasional plantings of semi-tropicals added off of the natural drains which more or less runs parallel to the perimeter road and ending behind the Ag. Extension buildings (1973) and beginning at opposite end of woods should have a trail nearby or following along this drain. The native Iris should be planted in appropriate places. Also cypress and maple trees planted wherever possible along this trail. Where bridge crosses over drainage canal from the John Gray field there should be a small pond excavated deep enough to hold water. This should extend to both sides of bridge. From this point on east side up to Horticultural Superintendent House can be made one of the most attractive areas on the Plantation because of the sloping terrain. Most of the old trees can be dozed down to make room for reforestation and landscaping of this entire plot. This cross over should be made as attractive as possible – with azaleas, cypress, maple, windmill palms, etc.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Antique iron statue of Greek farm boy with xxxx the neglected to date (Jan. 73)- it should be made permanently beautiful with formal planting of perennials and shrubs. The corresponding sides should be planted alike or symmetrically. This must be supervised by a landscape architect to be done correctly as should most of the horticultural plantings where design is important – as is the annual garden to left of entrance. The garden backed by pines must first be xxxx and xxxx xxxx. ----The iron base on which statue rests is from one of the columns of Gardere Plantation House. Just beyond this garden is ideal location for a conservatory – Along both sides of I-12 a double or triple row of principally pine trees and bamboo should be planted to obscure highway and traffic and perhaps to deaden sound. --- Space on both sides of the underpass should be landscaped. The Essen Blvd. Entrance should have and old brick columns on either side – The ones at museum can be duplicated – The annuals garden should meet with the approval of a landscape architect as to the arrangement of annuals. – When this garden and the roses are at their peak – the public should be notified by news media, so that flower lovers can benefit – thus making these projects worthwhile. This has been neglected so far – Unless the Entrance has to be changed, - a garden showing proper use of various shrubs can be planted adjacent to annual garden – This too should be supervised by landscape architect – If the annual garden has to be relocated the ideal spot would xxxx to be adjacent to rose garden—We hope the field will always be known as “The John Gray Field.”- The low lying area back of Al Jarreau’s House should be planted in cypress and maple trees. The woods on higher ground can be dozed down and reforested as an arboretum or just woods with pines predominating. The lathhouse should be carefully located from the landscape point of view – perhaps near the area spoken of above. They should not spoil the general appearance of the rose garden area. A reputable landscape architect should be consulted as often as necessary.

The severed half of Plantation caused by I-12 is problematical as to its best possible use. -----Should LSU wish to carry out the plan for an Administrative building with agreement already outlined by the articles of donation – would be one solution for use of xxxx open xxxx bordering on Essen Blvd. I xxx xxx xxxx xxx extending far back and further into xxxx xxx xx xxxx – The woods xxx then be left and treated the same as on opposite side of I-12 – xxxx to a sanctuary for wild life. It should xxx property line so that a xxx of trees has xxx xxx xxxx xxx quickly and daily – otherwise it will continue to xxxx xxx xxxxxxxxx xxxx for xxx xxxx xxxxxxxx – These woods should also have the xxxx cut – and weak places reforested. XXXXX goes on bamboo clumps can be planted 100 feet apart from xxx xxx wherever trees don’t interfere and entirely around or near fence around the entire plantation. Every effort should be made to eventually screen out the Hwy. – and the development along Wards Creek. – The excavation owned by Foster Creighton can certainly be turned into an asset instead of liability by way of lake development as it flanks the Hwy. The Hwy Commission can be made to do something about this eyesore.