Nature and Norfolk: The History of the Norfolk Botanical Garden

Cheryl S. White
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NATURE AND NORFOLK:

THE HISTORY OF THE NORFOLK BOTANICAL GARDEN

by

Cheryl S. White
B.A. May 2003, Old Dominion University

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Old Dominion University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

HUMANITIES

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
MAY 2006

Approved by:

Robert Wojtowicz (Director)

Linda McGreevy (Member)

Jeffrey Richards (Member)
If what they say is true, that first impressions are always the most important, then the city of Norfolk, Virginia could impress anyone. The Norfolk Botanical Garden began as approximately 30 acres surrounding Mirror Lake, adjacent to the proposed Norfolk Municipal Airport in 1938. Today the Garden consists of 158 acres that include a variety of garden styles, manmade canals, and extensive educational facilities. It serves as the first and last view visitors have of Norfolk. The Norfolk Botanical Garden is an example of interdisciplinary co-operation. Biology, urban planning, landscape architecture, and various political involvements are all expressed within the Garden’s design and purpose. It provides a physical representation of what can occur when urban planners and city officials take the time to create an environment worthy of its form and function. The Garden is the balance between two necessary, and often opposing, forces within a city: the need for modern air travel and the need for open spaces in the community. By juxtaposing these two competitive functions, Norfolk has visually balanced technology and community, man and nature. This thesis will discuss the evolution of the Norfolk Azalea Garden started in 1938 to the current Norfolk Botanical Garden. Special attention will be given to the early involvement of the Works Projects Administration and the social and racial implications present in the Garden’s creation. Secondly, this thesis will provide documentation of all the Garden’s resources. Lastly, this thesis will address the
significance of the Norfolk Botanical Garden within the context of urban planning. Factors including the Garden’s location and continued growth in size and function will be analyzed. Recently, Norfolk Botanical Garden was nominated and approved to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This honor provides a strong basis on which to discuss the trend towards preservation of historic landscapes. The impact of this nomination will further the Garden’s function and provide new means to acknowledge local history.
Dedicated to the memory of
Mrs. Edna Joyce, original WPA worker
Norfolk Botanical Garden.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank the staff of the Norfolk Botanical Garden for all their help and support while I researched the Garden’s History. A particular thanks goes to Mariesa Woodring, Ann Parsons, and Perry Matthews. I would also like to thank my Thesis Committee: Dr. Robert Wojtowicz, Dr. Linda McGreevy, and Dr. Jeffrey Richards, as well as Humanities Program Director, Dr. Dana Heller. A very special thanks goes to the staff of the Kirn Memorial Library and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Lastly, thank you to all my friends and family, without your support I would never have come this far.
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SECTION I
THE EVOLUTION OF THE NORFOK AZALEA GARDEN
TO THE NORFOLK BOTANICAL GARDEN

Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
~Mother Goose Nursery Rhyme

The Norfolk Botanical Garden is currently a 158-acre garden. It encompasses miles of trails, 20 themed gardens, canals, and educational facilities. As simple as clearing land and planting flowers may appear, the process of developing such a large and diverse garden spans nearly seventy decades. The project was the brainchild of Norfolk City Manager Thomas P. Thompson. He envisioned an azalea garden that would line the shores of Norfolk’s watershed property. Over a few years time Thompson enlisted the advice of Fred Huette, Supervisor of Norfolk’s Parks and Recreation, and Charles Gillette, a well-known landscape architect. These three men saw the potential for a successful garden in Norfolk.

THE GARDEN AND THE WPA

In 1938, Edna Joyce was amongst the many people in Norfolk feeling the effects of the Great Depression. She was sixteen, African-American, and unemployed. Norfolk city officials decided to enlist the help of the federal government by applying for grants from the Works Progress Administration. In September 1938, Ms. Joyce joined 200

This paper follows the format requirements of The Chicago Manual of Style 15th edition.
other African American women, as they began the task of clearing and planting what is known today as the Norfolk Botanical Garden.³

On an afternoon of site visits, Huette and Thompson discovered a significant area filled with loblolly pines. Immediately the two men knew that the falling needles would provide the perfect natural mulch for developing azaleas. In addition, the land was located next to the proposed Norfolk Municipal airport. The land was technically part of Princess Anne County, but was still considered Norfolk’s watershed property.⁴ Not sure how the land ownership issues would affect plans to develop the area, Thompson and Huette first attempted to include the development with the airport project, citing it as a community garden. The men were advised by the Department of Air Commerce and Works Progress Administration authorities to develop the project individually.⁵

In order to receive Works Progress Administration grants Norfolk had to provide justification for its planned project. Not only was the project to be useful within the city, it had to provide relief to workers experiencing the effects of the Depression. Thompson knew exactly how to fulfill these requirements. He proposed that the azalea garden be planted by the large number of unskilled, African-American women, of which there were approximately 600 listed on the Relief roll in Norfolk. Many of these women had moved to the city from lettuce farms in Princess Anne County. They were experienced in stoop work and labor, but had little or no other significant work skills. While Norfolk had attempted to utilize their labor, their skills had yet to be used effectively. This project was designed specifically to utilize their labor skills. Also, by employing these women in

⁵ Ibid.
a WPA-funded project they would no longer need the direct financial assistance from the city.⁶

The development of a garden would affect Norfolk’s economy and provide a unique tourist attraction for future visitors by plane. Norfolk had long considered the possibility of planting an azalea garden. Due to the area’s climate, Norfolk would be able to grow both southern and northern species of azaleas, thus providing a combination of gardens located in neighboring states at one location.⁷ In fact, the city nurseries of Norfolk had collected over 45,000 azalea cuttings from citizens, and 7,000 over these azaleas had already taken root. The donation of these plants was seen as a positive contribution on the part of the city and support of the Garden.⁸

As for the impact on the city, financially the possibilities were open-ended. Even during the Depression, azalea gardens in the south were quite successful. The Charleston Azalea Gardens in South Carolina were still making a profit during the hard fiscal times.⁹ Moreover, while some gardens take time to develop to their full potential, azalea gardens were quick to develop. The Cypress Gardens in Charleston opened in 1930, and by 1935 were already garnering acclaim.¹⁰ Thompson knew that Norfolk had all the necessary elements for creating a successful azalea garden: skilled laborers, neutral climate, excellent land and location, as well as currently growing azaleas.

In order to ensure the acceptance of his proposal to the Works Progress Administration, Thompson contacted Charles F. Gillette, a well-known landscape

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⁷"Greater Floral Variety is Planned for Gardens at Municipal Airport," 1938, Thompson Records.
⁹Charles Gillette to Thomas P. Thompson, 26 August 1938, Thompson Records.
¹⁰Ibid.
architect working in Richmond, Virginia, to get suggestions for the proposed site. Gillette was known in Virginia for his landscape designs for the College of William and Mary, the Cavalier Hotel, and the restoration of several historic gardens. He also had received the only award given by the Architectural League for landscape architects in 1938.\textsuperscript{11} Gillette responded favorably to the project, saying that he felt Norfolk would be the ideal climate for an azalea garden. Following a site visit in August of 1938 Gillette wrote:

Norfolk can grow more things than any other location that I know of, because Southern materials can be grown there and northern materials are quite at home. With the wonderful opportunity in the lake area we can do not only what has been done in Charleston in azaleas but what has been done in other gardens of exotic nature throughout the United States. Because of the scale of the property I think it would be monotonous to have miles of azalea walks but I think we might take one area for Japanese iris, one for crepe myrtles and I would have an absolutely complete list of hollies.\textsuperscript{12}

Gillette also suggested adding footbridges, picnic areas, and a variety of other plants that would easily fare well in Norfolk’s climate. Gillette’s suggestions were eventually altered to accommodate the pending airport and necessary road construction. However, Gillette’s advisory involvement with the Garden is documented in a series of letters between Gillette and Thompson.\textsuperscript{13}

With all the proper details in place, the project was awarded WPA funds allotted by the federal government. On June 30, 1938, the initial project was given a WPA grant

\textsuperscript{11} “Greater Floral Variety is Planned for Gardens at Municipal Airport,” Thompson Records.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} Correspondences between Charles Gillette and Tommy Thompson, 1936-1939, Thompson Records.
of $76,278 and was expected to last one year. The official WPA record of the project reads:

#665-31-3-8 - Develop a garden park to feature azaleas and other native plants on city owned property adjacent to lakes comprising the Norfolk City Water Supply. This project will operate in Princess Anne County, in and near the city of Norfolk. Not a normal activity of the sponsor and no regularly employed personnel will be displaced. In addition to projects specifically approved.

Figure one illustrates the organizational structure employed for this WPA project.

There were 200 African-American women and 20 African-American men employed as workers over the three years that the Garden was a WPA-funded project. The number of workers fluctuated during these three years, the highest number of workers being 200 and the lowest number being less than 50. The worker to land ratio during the periods of lower employment was approximately one woman for each acre.

The work on the Garden occurred in three phases. The first phase was clearing the land from a wild state. This involved uprooting plants, clearing trees, removing stumps, and the moving of earth by wheel barrel to infill swamp-like areas of the property. The second phase of the Garden’s development included the laying of topsoil, planting of over 4,000 azaleas and 2,000 rhododendrons, as well as defining the walking path. The last phases included the observation and correction of any new plantings with regard to sunlight, water, and returning weeds. This final phase also included building up

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15 Microfilm, 1938, T935, Roll 71, Records of Works Progress Administration [WPA], 1935-1944, RG 69, National Archives Branch Depository, College Park, Md. (hereafter referred to as National Archives Microfilm).
17 Fred Huette to Mrs. Peters, Field Supervisor WPA, 12 July 1939, Thompson Records.
the shoreline surrounding Mirror Lake, and filling any depressed areas caused by settlement of soils where stumps and fills were originally incurred.\(^\text{18}\)

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\[^{18}\text{Ibid.}\]
The Garden project took place year-round; therefore, garden workers were exposed to mosquitoes, poison ivy, and all weather conditions. An oral history project of the descendant’s of the original garden workers has revealed that one woman was known as “The Snake Lady.” Her job was to go into the overgrown areas of the garden and kill any snakes before the other workers began uprooting plants. 19 Edna Joyce, the last-known living WPA worker from the Garden, was sixteen years old and one of the youngest workers employed on the project. She recounts that the women got down on their knees to pull scrub brush and weeds, some wearing gloves if they had any. Ms. Joyce swears, “That was a place with a lot of roots. I mean, a lot of roots, so many you couldn’t imagine. But we got them up.” 20 Matthew Austin, the son of WPA worker Sally Tucker Austin, recalls that during the winter his mother would layer in every article of clothing she could find before leaving for work. When she returned home he would

20 Stoughton, 6.
help her unravel and she would sit by the fire for almost an hour "to thaw out." Austin remembers his mother's account of days when the snow was so heavy she could barely see her own hands.  

The work began at 9 a.m.; following often long walks to where the city-sponsored trucks would pick up the women. At this time, the Garden was almost ten miles outside of the city. The workers were paid $0.25 an hour, $17.75 every two weeks. The workers ate lunches they brought from home and stopped work at 5 p.m. According to Joyce, "You did what you had to do, then you went home and looked for another day. You were happy doing it because you were getting money, and you were not ashamed of it."  

Today, the efforts of the original garden workers are still visible in the original area of the Garden. These women turned overgrown, swampy acres into a garden that stylistically expresses the national trend in naturalistic and wilderness landscape architecture. The walking trail that encircles Mirror Lake is in its original location, however it has been asphalt-paved. A series of historic photographs that illustrate the evolution of the walking trial from 1938-1954 are located in Appendix B. The walking trail is lined with many of the original azaleas planted by the WPA workers. Many of these bushes are over six feet tall and their clippings have been planted in other parts of the Garden. Without the physical labor of the 200 African-American women, Norfolk Azalea Garden and the later Norfolk Botanical Garden would never have occurred. The

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21 Stoughton, 8.
22 Ibid.
Garden is the physical manifestation of the hundreds of hours they worked and the tons of soil they moved.

In the spring of 1939, the City of Norfolk requested an extension for the Azalea Garden Project and additional WPA funds for its completion. The project heralded itself as having, "gainfully provide [d] employment for colored women, relief labor, and to do so in the most efficient manner." In this 1939 proposal, the Azalea Gardens were included with several other WPA landscaping projects undertaken in Norfolk. The purpose of the project described on the WPA project proposal reads:

To provide employment for needy persons in planting nurseries, preparation of soils, culture of ground covers, shrubs, and trees in City landscaping. Development of City owned water shed properties located in Princess Anne County. Landscaping in Public parks for beautification & Prevention of soil erosion – and work appurtenant & incidental for its proper expedience. In addition to projects specifically approved.

On August 5, 1939, following a letter from the President of the Norfolk Association of Commerce, A.B. Schwarzkopf, to Congressman Colgate W. Darden requesting approval of a portion of the WPA extension, additional funds of $138,553 were released. Most of these funds still centered on the Azalea Gardens.

By 1941, the Garden had grown to include over 75 acres, 5 miles of trails and over 50,000 azaleas. On March 5, 1941, the Garden was approved for another project extension. WPA records describe this extension as:

Landscape, beautify and develop the gardens of various city properties, and operate plant nurseries. Work includes landscaping the Azalea Gardens, developing and

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26 Ibid.
27 A.B. Schwarzkopf to Congressman Colgate W. Darden, 5 August 1939, Thompson Records.
beautifying roadsides at the Municipal Airport, developing city watershed properties for use as recreational areas, beautifying and landscaping Barraud and Lafayette Parks including establishment of an additional recreational center, and operating plant nurseries, the products in which are to be used on this project. This project will operate in the city of Norfolk and in Norfolk and Princess Anne Counties outside of the city of Norfolk. Publicly owned property. Sponsor: Norfolk City Council. 28

On October 12, 1941, WPA issued a Project Termination Notice to the city of Norfolk. From this point on, the Azalea Garden no longer received WPA grants as funding for its development. 29

HUETTE YEARS

On April 15, 1941, the Azalea Gardens officially became known as the Norfolk Municipal Gardens. 30 During the following years, Norfolk concentrated on war efforts and the Gardens was left in the hands of only five staff members. 31 At one point in 1942, the Garden was slated to be demolished to build military barracks. Huette recalls walking around the grounds and coming across soldiers cutting down trees and uprooting plants. The men told him they were under orders to clear the land for barracks. Huette began to frantically call everyone he could think of to preserve the Garden. Finally he came a cross a high-ranking Air Force official, and plant-lover, who agreed to preserve the area. The demolition orders were quickly reversed and the Air Force, who had taken over the Norfolk Municipal Airport, was ordered to preserve the existing Garden and its

28 Microfilm, 1941, T937, Roll 18, National Archives Microfilm.
29 Ibid.
30 Chas. B. Borland, Norfolk City Manager to Norfolk City Council, 15 April 1941, Thompson Records.
operations as much as possible. Therefore, they built barracks on an undeveloped, 50-acre tract of land south of Mirror Lake, leaving the majority of the trees standing as a means of coverage from possible air attacks. After the war, the federal government returned these acres to the city, which then gave the land to the airport. Since the airport did not need this area, the Garden was asked to maintain it.

The success of the Garden speaks for itself. In the five-week blooming period in April 1946, 14,975 cars visited the Garden. The following spring, May 1947, Norfolk Municipal Gardens were featured in National Geographic Magazine. The article, “Nautical Norfolk Turned to Azaleas,” proved that Norfolk’s dream of having an azalea garden had come true. The article however credited most of the garden design to Fred Huette rather than Charles Gillette. Concerned that Gillette would feel slighted in recognition, Thompson wrote to Gillette:

> The unvarnished fact is that the garden club of women of Norfolk, particularly the members of small neighborhood groups, have deitized Huette to the extent that he seems to have reached the point where he actually believes that like chant éclair he is responsible for the rising of the sun. It is too bad because he has done a good job within his limitations in developing the plan, which you outlined and started for these gardens

In an effort to protect Gillette’s involvement in the Garden’s development, Thompson had the following statement inserted into Norfolk city records concerning the Garden:

> Through the cooperation of the Department of Public Welfare, we secured the advice and counsel of Mr. Charles Gillette, landscape architect, who prepared the plans in

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32 Ibid.
accordance with which the Gardens were originally developed. \(^{35}\)

Today, Gillette's early involvement is honored at the Garden. Huette's role, however, extends beyond the first phase of the Garden's history, to the creation of Norfolk's first and only botanical garden. Therefore, his early deification by local groups may have been justified because his influence is present in the Garden through the late 1960's.

Beginning in the early 1950's, the issues of roadways were brought to the forefront. The original entrance to the airport meant traveling past the Garden. During peak blooming periods, the roads were filled with cars. Norfolk city police officers were often used to direct traffic. With the Garden and airport parking lots accommodating only 2,000 cars, visitors took to walking to the Garden. \(^{36}\) The connection of the Garden to the airport was not only noted in their shared roadways but also an entrance gate (which is no longer standing) erected in 1952. The gate was constructed by the Norfolk Department of Parks and Forestry. It consisted of stone-clad pillars surmounted by a crossbeam, which read "Norfolk Municipal Gardens." The erection of the entrance gate was an effort to entice travelers to visit the garden while on layovers at the airport. \(^{37}\)

In 1954, Norfolk held its first International Azalea Festival. \(^{38}\) The festival commemorates The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). NATO is an alliance of 26 countries from North America and Europe. NATO was formed on April 4, 1949 when the participating countries signed the North Atlantic Treaty. As outlined by the

\(^{35}\) Ibid.
\(^{37}\) "Gateway to Azalea Gardens," \textit{Virginian Pilot}, 12 April 1952, NBG Standing Files.
treaty, “the fundamental role of NATO is to safeguard the freedom and security of its member countries by political and military means.” The North American NATO Headquarters are located in Norfolk, Virginia. The International Azalea Festival includes the coronation of an Azalea Queen and honors a different participating NATO country each year. The Festival is held the third week in April, during the Garden’s peak blooming period.40

The extra traffic brought to the Garden by the Azalea Festival finally forced the city to seriously address the roadway concerns. A 1956 article from the Ledger-Dispatch best describes the situation:

Even while there were routes to the adjoining facilities, the task of getting to either the airport or the garden was a formidable one for most motorists when the gardens were in flower. But after the Civil Aeronautics Administration closed the old airport road – because of danger involved in runway crossing- the azalea season congestion became acute. The narrow, winding road, which is now forced to carry all the traffic, is grossly inadequate for the Azalea Festival burden, for the normal flow of visitors at other times in the spring and for the airport itself. Certainly, this little country road gives Norfolk’s visitors by air an unnecessarily poor opinion of the community.

Norfolk has too much at stake in the operation of the airport to settle for anything less than modern, unimpeded access to this facility. The same has become true of the Municipal Gardens, which have developed into a first-rate tourist attraction and which are the focus of such expanding promotional efforts as the International Azalea Court. Not only will the gardens’ potential go unrealized, but much of their existing value will be lost if the approach road situation goes uncorrected much longer.41

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Due to this traffic concern, the routes to the Garden were eventually changed from an entrance off Little Creek Road to one off Azalea Garden road. In addition, future plans to extend Norview Avenue to the airport were put into place.

In 1957, Fred Huette began what would become the next phase of the Garden’s development. Huette proposed the idea of creating a botanical garden in Norfolk. Many sites were considered for this project, but ultimately the land north of the current Norfolk Municipal Gardens was chosen. On February 18, 1958, the 75-acre tract of undeveloped land north of the city garden was dedicated the Norfolk Botanical Garden.

According to Huette’s own definition “[A] ‘Botanical Garden’ is a multi-million endowed foundation revolving around some original famous garden whose owners carefully collected over the years many exotic and native plants. This in turn is entrusted to a group of learned people in that field whose business is to collect and assemble rare plants and exhibit and preserve their posterity.” Norfolk’s botanical garden shared the botanical garden’s mission to preserve, exhibit, and collect varieties of plant life, however it differed in several aspects. First, the Garden was financially supported by modest funds including $5,000 given by the Old Dominion Horticultural Society and $12,000 from the city. This garden also differed in that it consisted of virgin land. The Norfolk Municipal Garden located to the south already had a tremendous following of azalea-enthusiasts, which would surely attract visitors to the new area, but the botanical garden was first developed as a separate entity from the Norfolk Municipal Gardens. The

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new Norfolk Botanical Garden was governed by a Board of Directors and Fred Huette was appointed Superintendent.45

The motto of the Norfolk Botanical Garden outlined by its Board was: “To promote for the people of Tidewater, Virginia, a Garden that will always remain an inspiration, and lead the home gardener to greater enjoyment and accomplishment in his own yard.”46 The Board agreed to maintain the area as an educational garden workshop rather than a scientific exhibit. By catering to both scientists through exotic and unique plant life, and homeowners with accessible and practical gardening examples, the Garden would attract the most visitors and members. From the beginning of the Norfolk Botanical Garden, the commitment to the community was expressed in their desire to show Tidewater citizens the possibilities of natural beauty within this region’s temperate climate. The Board also agreed to relocate the International Azalea Festival to the newer part of the Garden, once these areas were fully in bloom. This way the beauty of Norfolk could be displayed to countries around the world.47 Eventually the distinction between the two gardens faded away and the entire area is now considered the Norfolk Botanical Garden.

Upon announcing the plans for the Norfolk Botanical Garden, Norfolk received praise from numerous sources. This botanical garden was the first civically planned development of its kind in the United States. Most botanical gardens began as donations from private collections, rather than designed from scratch by city officials and local community groups.48 In Virginia, the last significant botanical garden grew during the

45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
Revolutionary period, circa 1705. This was the private garden of John Clayton. Clayton was the clerk of the court in Gloucester County, who laid out a garden on his farm "Windsor." During his 51 years of service to Gloucester County, Clayton acquired the largest collection of plants native to Virginia, as well as many exotic plant species from around the world. Clayton obsessively maintained drawings and records of every plant in his collection. In 1739, his obsessive documentation became a book entitled "Flora Virginica." The book was printed in Leyden, Holland, and it ran for several editions. Unfortunately, nothing is physically left of his Windsor Garden. There is only a marker left to recall the great garden that once flourished in what is today Matthews County. Sadly, Clayton's original drawings and papers were burned during the Revolutionary war.49

With the creation of a new botanical garden, Norfolk would again claim ownership of one of the most diverse collections in the United States. Following a site visit to Norfolk, Dr. Henry T. Skinner, director of the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. wrote: "I congratulate you on this milestone in the horticultural activities of your enterprising community. Now that I have inspected the site, I am certain that you will eventually have one of the finest developments of its kind in the country."50 He was furthermore impressed by the educational possibilities present with the garden: "Pupils from the lowest grades to the high school level can be taken there and

50 "Dr. Skinner Terms Botanical Garden Milestone in Horticultural Activities," Ledger-Dispatch, 28 February 1958, NBG Standing Files.
shown the principles of botany and plant life in their natural setting. It will bring many city dwellers closer to the wonders of nature.”  

Norfolk was quick to develop this garden. Plans included such details as a lagoon (currently known as Friendship Pond) featuring aquatic plants and a system of manmade canals that would carry visitors on a boat tour of the garden. The excavated canals would also provide the soil needed to construct a 500 foot slope to be called NATO hill, in honor of the NATO Headquarters located in Norfolk. The hill would also include a reflecting pool and serve as the focal point to the NATO Gardens. The NATO Gardens were originally planned to exhibit garden types and plant species from other NATO countries. This plan was eventually altered to become one large garden with different varieties of plant life from different regions. The idea to develop the canal system came from Huette after visiting the Florida Cypress Garden, where visitors toured gardens by electrically operated boats. The idea was unique and profitable, because the boat tour would be available at a small fee for visitors.

In 1959 alone, the Norfolk Botanical Garden had planted a tract of land containing 9,800 perennials and 10,000 bulbs in 60 species and 350 varieties with 219 shrubs and trees. The Garden had excavated 250,000 cubic yards of soil from canals and used it to build hills on the landscapes. The canals, which would not be complete until 1961, were progressing with 240 feet completed. The garden had also put into place a mist irrigation system. This system used 30% less water than traditional methods, and

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51 “Arboretum Director Lauds Botanical Garden Project,” Ledger-Dispatch, 28 February 1958, NBG Standing Files.
53 “Canal Digging Starts at New Garden Site,” Ledger-Dispatch, 21 October 1959, NBG Standing Files.
55 Ibid.
served as outdoor air conditioning for visitors. On April 13, 1960, The Norfolk Botanical Garden officially opened to the public and to praise.57

The success of the Garden pushed Huette to complete pending projects and find financial means to pursue even larger developments. In July 1960, the Garden asked Norfolk City Council for an additional $54,065. These funds would be used to complete several projects including the construction of a boat basin, a retaining wall and terrace, an ornamental footbridge, roads, and a dock. Some of the funds would also be used for landscaping, irrigation, and to purchase boats. City Manager, Thomas F. Maxwell, recommended that city provide the means to cover boat costs, but that the Garden attain the rest of the money through bonds.58 This began the Garden’s constant state of fundraising. Whether through bonds or donations from individuals and local groups the Garden would, from this point on, rely heavily on the support of the community to aid in development costs.

By late 1960, the city had appropriated $138,000 to the Garden and its various attractions. Understanding that the Garden was asking for significant financial support, Huette began to create designs that would succeed commercially. His original plan to develop individual gardens to each NATO nation was revamped to be one large garden with different species highlighted from various countries. In addition, he planned a rose garden that would trace the development of the rose through classic roses to hybrid tea roses to perennial roses.59 “We’ve got to have something different to attract outside flower lovers. There are all kinds of regular gardens on the East Coast. This rose garden

59 Tucker, “Gardens to Grow for NATO,” NBG Standing Files.
idea should do the trick." Huette explained. "We want the Botanical Gardens to be an artistic achievement, but we can’t lose sight of the commercial aspect either."61

While the city could argue against many of the Garden’s expenses, it could hardly deny the construction of an Administration Building. The construction of an Administration Building would provide the Garden with the means to become a self-supporting, non-tax entity. Garden staff would have a location and means to raise funds properly. The Administration Building would also include a 300-seat lecture hall, which would be available for rental of various groups. The construction of the Administration Building also prompted the Garden to begin offering $500 charter memberships to local groups.62

The Administration Building was designed by Norfolk Architect Vernon A. Moore.63 It is comprised of a two-story rotunda flanked by one-story wings in a V-plan. One of the wings would hold the Garden’s offices and the other wing would hold a lecture hall. Visitors would be able to access the boat tour from the back of the building. The building was planned to consist mostly of glass and cobblestone. The cobblestones were actually granite stones that once lined the streets of Norfolk. The building was designed to have 13,000 square feet of space. The building also featured a reinforced concrete roof in a folded-plate, or saw-tooth design.64 This building is a good example of the International Style of architecture present in Norfolk.

60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
In addition to the Administration Building, a Tea House and Restroom facility were designed in the same style by the same architect. The idea of a Tea House was once again presented by Fred Huette. Huette wanted more than a hotdog stand for visitors, and while on a trip to England found a quaint teahouse at the famed Kew Gardens. The teahouse is 3,800 square feet and one-story. It was designed to accommodate 68 persons and to house a small gift shop. The cost of the three buildings was approximately $250,000. Adjacent to the Tea House was planned a Japanese garden. This garden opened in 1962. It was designed by local Portsmouth landscape designer, Nancy Timmons. In 1995, this Japanese garden underwent a complete restoration and rededication.

The cobblestones of Norfolk city streets are still visible in several places at the Garden. The Stone Bridge, currently located near Baker Overlook is a prime example of the Garden’s ability to salvage goods. The bridge, which would have cost the city $8,000, cost the Garden only $3,500 due to the ingenuity of Huette. The one-lane bridge spans a manmade canal. The beautiful arch of the bridge was constructed using the frame of a Quonset hut. Huette suggested using the hut to create the arch while the cement set. After the cement hardened the Quonset hut was removed. The stone cladding on the bridge is from granite cobblestone removed from Norfolk streets. According to Ocie A. Barnes, then assistant parks superintendent, “Even the steel beams were salvage. When we stockpiled all these items we had no idea that we’d use them in a bridge.”

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68 Ibid.
1961 also gave the Garden funds to purchase their first, "trackless trains" (referred to now as trams) so that visitors could enjoy a guided garden tour on wheels, rather than walking. In addition, Vernon Moore, architect of the Administration Building and support buildings revealed his plans for the NATO Observation tower. These plans provided the same roof style as the other buildings, thus creating architectural unity through the garden. The observation Tower is 33-feet high and overlooks a 1,000-foot vista of a landscaped lawn ending at Lake Wright. The vista is planned to resemble the grounds of Versailles in France.69

While the years of 1961-1963 were the most intense construction years at the garden thus far, it was during these years that the Garden changed something as equally significant as its physical shape. In December 1961, in anticipation of Fred Huette’s retirement in early 1966, the Garden employed its first curator. The position was officially appointed by City Manager, Thomas Maxwell from a field of 15 candidates. With the approval of Huette Maxwell appointed George W. Baker curator of the Norfolk Botanical Garden. This curator title would expire once Huette retired and Baker would fill his role as Director of the Garden. Baker, 38, was a graduate of Michigan State University. He had a BS in landscape architecture and had ran his own landscaping and nursery business in Michigan. He also served as superintendent of buildings and grounds at Michigan State University in Dearborn.70 By sharing the transition phase of employment with Huette, Baker was able to fully learn about the Garden from someone who created it and truly understood the future direction.

While one may not think the Garden would be the battleground for a debate on the separation of church and state, in 1962 it was. In May 1962, the Marion Crosby Garden Club dedicated the Marion Crosby Ferndale at the Norfolk Botanical Garden. The garden honors Mrs. Albert V. Crosby, a prominent figure in local garden clubs. It was the first garden at the Botanical Garden complex to commemorate a person. In addition to the garden a 6-foot tall, bronze sculpture of St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of birds, animals and gardens was presented for permanent display at the Garden. The sculpture was the work of local artist Miss Eleanor W. Mellon and its approximate value in 1962 was $6,000.71

Shortly after the dedication of the St. Francis sculpture, Eugene W. Sawyer petitioned the Norfolk City Council to remove the sculpture based on the separation between church and state. Sawyer argued that the statue was a religious presence in a public park and that by presenting the Roman Catholic faith with a depiction of one of their saints many people would be offended.72 When interviewed Sawyer said, "I am not an atheist. I think churches are a wonderful thing. But I think they should support themselves."73 His request was denied by the City Council, but Sawyer took his case to the local courts. In court, Sawyer argued that city-funds were used in the maintenance of this religious structure. Thus, the maintenance of this sculpture would violate the state Constitution and code respecting the establishment of religion and propagation of religious opinion. Sawyer said, "I am not fighting a church or group of people. I'm fighting for the principle of separation of church and state. If I don't find the relief I seek

71 "Marion Crosby Ferndale and Statue Dedication Set at Botanical Garden," Ledger-Dispatch, 17 May 1962, NBG Standing Files.
73 "Court Asked to Halt Spending for Saint," Ledger-Dispatch, 6 December 1962, NBG Standing Files.
in this court, I plan to carry it to the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals.” He was finally opposed when Norfolk City Attorney, Virgil Gore Jr. explained that this sculpture was a work of art and educational, not a religious symbol. Gore also cited a 1952 case from New Orleans, Louisiana. In this case, the state ruled that two statues depicting religious figures in a New Orleans park did not violate the separation of church and state.

The following year, 1963, included the dedication of all three new garden buildings and some unexpected sculptures at the Botanical Garden. Eleven sculptures by American sculptor, Moses Jacob Ezekiel were donated. He was commissioned in Rome in 1879 to carved eleven statues of famous artists to fill the niches on the Corcoran Gallery in Washington. Ezekiel worked on the statues from 1879 to 1884. He was paid $600 for the first 4 statues and $650 for the remaining seven. The statues are seven feet tall, carved from marble, and each weighs over 3 tons. The figures were placed at the Corcoran Art Gallery (currently known as the Renwick Building) until 1901 when the Corcoran moved to a larger building. At this point, the sculptures were put up for sale.

The statues first found themselves the property of Mrs. Evalyn Walsh, a Washington socialite who owned an estate named “Friendship Estate.” Walsh arranged the statues around her swimming pool. In 1949, the Walsh estate went to auction and the statues were purchased by the Marymount School in Richmond. In 1952, they changed hands again, this time to an antique dealer in Richmond. Next, Bruce Dunstan of Richmond acquired six of the statues for his Richmond estate, Broadview. Four of the

74 Ibid.
75 “Sawyer Fails to Bar Assisi,” Virginian Pilot, 8 December 1962, NBG Standing Files.
76 “City Given 7 Statues,” Virginian Pilot, 1963, NBG Standing Files.
other statues were purchased by another Richmonder, Vincent Speranza. The remaining statue of Thomas Crawford became property of the Virginia Museum of Fine Art.\textsuperscript{77}

In 1963, Dunstan donated his six artist statues to the Botanical Garden. He also donated a 4-feet tall eagle with a wingspan of six feet that was placed at the end of the Statuary Vista near Lake Wright. The artist of the eagle is unknown. Through the efforts of Col. James Addison Hagan of Norfolk, a friend of Dunstan, the remaining statues were located and the owners persuaded to donate the works.\textsuperscript{78} Today the collection of all 11 sculptures can be seen in the 100 x 500 foot flowering Statuary Vista of the Norfolk Botanical Garden. The donation of these sculptures prompted the Garden to create a Fine Arts Committee of Norfolk Botanical Garden. The committee was meant to maintain and collect works of art. It had a vision of making the Garden into an international outdoor museum of fine arts.\textsuperscript{79}

In April 1964, the area behind the Garden’s newly dedicated Administration Building became known as the Fragrance Garden for the Blind. This garden features scented flowers including roses, magnolia, chive, marjoram, peppermint, thyme, lemon balm, arbutus, and gardenias. The walkway is studded with marble chips. The garden also features a serpentine wall with plant nameplates in Braille.\textsuperscript{80} Next to the garden for the blind is a sunken garden featuring aquatic plants and poet’s laurel. Also highlighted in the sunken garden is the rare Hong Kong camellia.\textsuperscript{81} This species of camellia was

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{80} “Garden for Blind Open in April,” \textit{Ledger-Star}, 25 February 1964, NBG Standing Files.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
discovered in 1957. The Norfolk Botanical Garden received a clipping of this flower and it first bloomed at the garden in 1959.  

While certain officials at the Garden set their sights of becoming internationally known for art collecting, rare camellias and catering to the handicapped, others set their sites a little lower, on children. Beginning in 1961 Huette proposed the idea of developing a children-friendly exhibit known as “Treasure Island.” This exhibit opened in July 2, 1964. The site selected for the project was located across Lake Wright, on a small peninsula of land near the current garden entrance before the Lake Wright causeway. The exhibit was based on Robert Louis Stevenson’s adventure novel, *Treasure Island*. Visitors could opt to travel to the site via trackless trains or by a small boat. The boat ferried the children to Skeleton Island where they were met by Captain Long John Silver, scampered through the fort and look-out tower, were guided across a swinging rope bridge to Treasure Island. At last, they would board a 60-ft replica of the ship *Hispaniola*. The tour was guided by costumed characters that shared the tale of a secret treasure. The entire journey took approximately 45 minutes and cost $0.50 for adults and $0.35 for children under 12. The train option cost only $0.10. The project was funded partially by the city and from local groups. The Little Creek Lions Club built the *Hispaniola* ship replica, which actually rested on piles in the water and did not float. This was one of the first of many children-center exhibits at the Norfolk Botanical Garden. Within the first month, over 13,000 visitors had seen Treasure Island, thus

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84 “Treasure Island to Open At Last,” *Virginian Pilot*, 30 June 1964, NBG Standing Files.
giving the Garden a profit of nearly $5,450.86 Unfortunately, Treasure Island is no longer a feature at the gardens. Skeleton Island once located just beyond the peninsula has since disappeared under the waters of Lake Wright.

On January 1, 1966, Fred Huette finally retired as Superintendent/Director of Norfolk Botanical Garden. As planned, George Baker replaced him after nearly four years of work with Huette.87 However, Huette put one more idea into play before he left. Huette launched the plans for a gardener’s school at the garden. Using federal funds available under the Manpower-Training Act, he planned an apprentice program for high school graduates. The program would last two years and have no less than 12 students enrolled. The program would not be geared as a replacement for college, but rather an opportunity to receive hands-on practical training in gardening techniques. The apprentices would receive $2,278 dollars before taxes in federal grants. This equals out to $1.00 an hour. In addition, certificates of completion would be given at the program’s end.88 In Huette’s opinion, gardens have a lot to offer educationally, “The good part about this school is you are dealing with nature, and if you are dealing with nature, and if you can pay attention, she can teach you more than all the test tubes and text books.”89 Huette’s parting dream for a school at the Garden actually began in summer of 1966.90

The idea for gardening school was not the only lingering idea of Fred Huette. Many of his ideas were far-fetched and sometimes not feasible. For example, when Huette first released the plans for the manmade canals at the Garden, he wanted to...
connect the Garden to Princess Anne Road via various waterways and manmade canals. He envisioned a boat tour that would attract visitors traveling along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. He planned a large parking facility that would be located on the edge of the highway. Here visitors could board a boat, travel from Lake Wright through a canal to Lake Whitehurst, tour the Garden and return. Huette commented on his plan in a 1963 article, “[I] t just seems to me that there should be some way to stop the tourists on their way to Florida or Charleston. Lots of them are traveling because they want to see gardens and plants and things.”

Huette’s desire to attract travelers did not end with his large-scale canal system. In 1965, he tried to attain large-scale dinosaur sculptures for a proposed prehistoric garden. The dinosaurs were created for New York’s World’s Fair by the Sinclair Oil Corporation. The sizes of these fiberglass creatures ranged from six-feet long to a 20-foot high, 70-foot long Brontosaurus. Huette requested either one or two of these dinosaurs be given to the Norfolk Botanical Garden. He planned to lure tourists to the site with the large creatures being visible from US 60. Once lured off the road visitors would be able to walk through a prehistoric garden with ferns and other ancient plants. Perhaps, the garden could be developed across Lake Whitehurst and visitors would take a boat to its location. Huette admits in a 1965 article, “I’m just interested in the dinosaur as a gimmick. For our gardens to grow we have to have new features. Plants by themselves aren’t enough. I don’t want any long-haired gardens, just for botanists,

92 “Norfolk’s Quest for Dinosaurs Encounters Stiff Competition,” Ledger Star, 17 August 1965, NBG Standing Files.
although our garden attract plenty [of] botanists. We want something for the children, too."\textsuperscript{93}

In 1966, Sinclair Oil Corporation decided not to give or sell their dinosaurs. At this time, Garden officials proposed the construction of their own dinosaurs. The project included construction of eight dinosaurs, a boat tour, the development of an ancient plant garden, and an observation tower located within the tallest dinosaur. The creatures would move and have noise effects.\textsuperscript{94} Huette stated his opinion in the \textit{Virginian Pilot}, "I hope the city will go through with it. I like the whole idea, and I think it far surpasses what Sinclair had. If ever the city wants an attraction to outdraw even the gardens themselves, it's those things."\textsuperscript{95} Luckily, the city did not approve the funding and the Garden remained unshadowed by gimmicks.

**BAKER YEARS**

Baker's first official year as Director of the Garden began well. He started a close relationship with Robert Matthews, Norfolk's Superintendent of City Parks and Recreation. This way the two men could monitor the growing attendance levels of the Garden and justify the city's continued financial contributions. On April 24, 1966, the Garden experienced the highest attendance to date, 13,550 visitors.\textsuperscript{96} The successful attendance records were maintained through the year, regardless of a summer drought that lowered the canal levels three feet below normal. During the drought the boat tour

\textsuperscript{93} Wayne Woodlice, "Building Dinosaur May Be Next Task for Huette," \textit{Ledger Star}, 20 July 1965, NBG Standing Files.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{96} "Attendance Booms at Norfolk Gardens," \textit{Ledger Star}, 2 May 1966, NBG Standing Files.
loading dock could not be used, therefore tours could only run on the Lake Whitehurst section of the Garden.\(^9^7\)

By 1967, the Garden encompassed 175 acres. This is the equivalent of 16 miles of individual gardens. The catalogue of plants in the Garden included over 3,000 species and varieties. The catalogue, maintained as a requirement of botanical garden status, is divided into two main sections. Plants are categorized as either Trees and Shrubs, or Perennials and Bulbs. Special categories include: azalea, camellia, iris, and exotic plants such as bamboo, fern, and orchid. A comprehensive publication of the Garden’s catalogue was included with the cost of membership. In 1967, the cost of membership for an individual was $10.00. Membership to the Garden included invitations to no less than seven horticulture lectures and functions per year, monthly bulletins, participation in the annual nursery plant exchange of rare plants, and the right to hold office and vote. Different levels of membership were available to gardeners of various experience levels and to corporations and groups wishing to join the Garden as a means of donation.\(^9^8\)

The 1966 drought and attendance boom at the Garden prompted several projects for 1967. First, a 1,300 foot bulkhead was constructed at the boat basin to allow for permanent dredging and deeper canals. In addition, the Garden replaced the solid wall of the Administration Building rotunda with glass. This allowed visitors to have a panoramic view of the garden from within the main building. Also, a sunken fountain was centrally placed on the backside of the Administration Building near the Fragrance garden.\(^9^9\) Lastly, local architects, Leavitt Associates, proposed the addition of a 6,000-

\(^{9^7}\) "High and Dry," *Ledger Star*, 29 July 1966, NBG Standing Files.


The amphitheater would be shaped like a sunken bowl and feature a dancing water fountain. The cover design of the amphitheater is probably the most inventive part of the plan. A 1967 article features a description of the cover by the architect:

'Sail-like sheets of acrilon fabric or vinyl coated canvas' suspended over the audience by an elaborate system of stainless steel cable and metal masts.' By shaping and spacing these sheets...effective protection from normal rain may be obtained, yet natural breezes and sights and smells of the garden will not be shut out. The theater would remain cool with the warm air vented, so on hot summer days the shade of these covers might be as welcome as would shelter in rain.  

The amphitheater was planned to replace the current theater used for the Azalea Festival at an estimated cost of $423,000. The amphitheater was never constructed.

1968 brought many unique and one-of-a-kind developments to the Garden. In July, Mr. and Mrs. John Staylor donated a giant palm tree to the Garden. The tree had to be moved by garden workers from their home on 526 Westover Avenue in the Ghent section of Norfolk. The task began in March with extensive monitored pruning to encourage growth of new, strong roots. The actual removal required a crane and nearly five hours of manpower. The tree was donated in memory of James Lawrence Staylor, nephew of Police Chief Claude B. Staylor, was had been killed the previous summer in a helicopter accident. The donation to the Garden was considerable, due to the plant's rarity in the region and its 20-foot growth. A local nursery owner priced the tree at over

100 Sheldon Leavitt, *Preliminary Engineering Report and Preliminary Drawings for Projects at Norfolk Botanical Garden City of Norfolk, Virginia* (Norfolk: Old Dominion University, 1967).
102 Ibid.
$350.00. In December, the rotunda of the Administration building featured "The World's Largest Candle." It was created by a Williamsburg, Virginia candle maker in honor of the Four Centuries of Christmas Tour being held in Norfolk. The candle was lit by Sam T. Barfield, Norfolk City Councilman, as the kick off for the five-day touring event.  

AIRPORT EXPANSION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF THE GARDEN

While the previous addition added much color to the Garden's history, the most significant development of 1968 involved the expansion of the Norfolk Municipal Airport. This expansion resulted in a land exchange agreement between the Garden and the city. By this time, the Garden had grown to over 275 acres, of which 125 acres were developed. The Garden agreed to give up about 50 acres to the south of Mirror Lake. The lost acreage resulted in the transplantation of over 6,000 azaleas, camellias, and rhododendrons to other areas of the Garden.

The expansion influenced the future development of the Garden and its relationship to the adjacent airport and the city of Norfolk. In exchange for the lost acreage, the Garden received funding for replacement development. The majority of this new development occurred on the northern arm of Lake Wright and created what was then considered the Garden proper. In addition, the redevelopment plans included a visual blurring of property lines through planting, making no distinction between the

103 Suzanne Holden, "Tree's Shimmy on Truck a Show-Stopper," Ledger Star, 3 July 1968, NBG Standing Files.
106 Ibid.
Garden and the newly expanded terminal of the Norfolk International Airport. A 1969 detailed article of the expansion states:

For the initial garden redevelopment related to the airport expansion, the port authority plan makes no distinction between the gardens proper and landscaping for the new terminal building, access roads, and parking area. The blurring of lines is a calculated feature of the overall development concept.\textsuperscript{107}

The need for open, natural space and the need of modern air travel are thus married.

Both needs are required in modern urban planning, and in Norfolk, they co-exist equally on a visual level. This expansion increased the significance of the Garden to the city, because it is now the first experience that visitors from around the world have of Norfolk.

In 1969, the Garden announced plans to demolish the NATO Bridge. The bridge was originally designed by Nancy Timmons, landscape designer for Norfolk Botanical Garden, in 1961. The eight-year old bridge was constructed using 100-year old timbers salvaged from a tobacco house in Norfolk. The bridge was designed as a pedestrian bridge, but was used as a crossing on the trackless-train tour. The city cited that the bridge needed to be replaced due to its current condition and added weight that it was bearing for its new function.\textsuperscript{108} The new bridge was replaced with a pre-stressed concrete and aluminum bridge in spring of 1970.\textsuperscript{109}

The actual transplantation of plants due to airport expansion took place in early 1971. The project was under serious deadlines based on the dormant period of the azaleas and camellias. The transplanting began in January and needed to be complete by

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{108} "NATO Bridge at Gardens to be Replaced for Spring," 1970, NBG Standing Files.
mid-April. The project was slow moving, due to weather issues and an inept contractor. The contract was awarded to the Hanna Garden Club Center, Inc. for $134,000, although project bids ranged as high as $300,000. By May of 1971, the transplantation was complete, but other projects associated with the move remained unfinished. Grass had not been planted, the asphalt trail was not paved, and most importantly, irrigation lines to the new area were not completed. This led the Garden to undertake manual watering of the transplanted azaleas and camellias. Baker criticized this process as, “not as efficient” compared to natural water uptake.

Another project to come out of the airport expansion was the construction of a land burm, or “earthen damn,” between the Garden and the airport. The elevated area protects the flowers from jet blasts and now features a lookout to the Norfolk International Airport. According to Bob Matthews, Superintendent, “This will help diminish both noise and gusts of wind from jet takeoffs. This leaves the city of Norfolk with an excellent opportunity to develop an airport which blends the concept of an airport and a garden.”

In 1972, inflation hit the Norfolk Botanical Garden. The Garden had always been free to the public, however there was a $0.25 parking fee per vehicle. Pedestrians could enter at no cost. In February 1972, the parking fee increased to $0.50 per vehicle. In addition, the trackless train tour was changed to $0.75 per person, and boat tour and

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Treasure Island excursion was raised to $1.00 per person. Following the increase, Garden attendance dropped 40% from 1971 to 1972. The decrease was due in part to the physical scars that remained following the major plant transplantation and ongoing airport construction.\textsuperscript{114} In July 1973, the City Council supported changing costs to an admission fee of $0.15 per person. This fee included free parking, tram tour, and also applied to pedestrian traffic.\textsuperscript{115}

As a means to recover from their losses in the early 1970s, the Norfolk Botanical Garden began a new project to entice visitors back to the Garden. The concept was to create model gardens. Model gardens would provide homeowners different examples of garden that could be grown in the Tidewater area.\textsuperscript{116} The plan was laid-out so that visitors would enter the garden through a faux-wall with a door into a backyard. Once viewing one yard, they would enter another door to the next model garden. The project received a $2,000 grant from the Old Dominion Horticultural Society to build the first of 47 model gardens in 1973. By 1974, only one model garden was complete with an additional garden only half-finished. The cost for the project was an estimated $3,500 for each garden including construction of faux-wall, fence, and landscaping. The projects themselves would be less for homeowners to create since landscaping and labor would be the only costs incurred. However, the $430,000 annual budget of the Garden and $92,500 in revenue sharing funds were both denied by the city due to other high priorities. Baker attempted to get local groups to contribute funds or sponsor a model garden, but was unsuccessful. Unfortunately the 10-acre plan of model gardens never

\textsuperscript{115} "Admissions Costs to Change at Garden," 1974, NBG Standing Files.
\textsuperscript{116} "Gardens Plan Model Backyards," 1973, NBG Standing Files.
came to fruition at the Garden, and due to the out-of-the-way location of the one completed garden, few had the opportunity to see the educational and community benefits that such a display could render.\textsuperscript{117}

The Garden began the 1970s with a rough start. Nevertheless, three important garden features were added during this time. The Fragrance Garden near the Administration Building was acclaimed for its unique design catering to the blind. This garden, dedicated in 1965, was planned in two parts by Julia Oswald: the first being the garden itself, the second was “Sculptures of Nature’s Living Things” to be placed inside the Administration Building. The second phase included bas-relief sculptures of plants and animals that could be physically handled by the blind. These sculptures would give them the opportunity to “see” nature. The second phase of this project was completed in 1976. With its completion, came renewed attention to the original Fragrance Garden planted eleven years earlier.\textsuperscript{118}

Secondly, the Garden received a rather unorthodox donation, a working windmill. The windmill belonged to W.J. “Undy” Browning, president of W.J. Browning Co., Inc. During his travels with his coal and shipping firm, Browning had become fascinated with miniature windmills in Holland. In 1959, he ordered a windmill directly from Holland and placed it on his lawn for the next 10 years. The windmill was functional; it drew in water and spun. On a trip to the Norfolk Botanical Garden, a week before his death, Browning noticed a makeshift windmill, and thought he should speak to someone about donating his. In memory of her husband, Mrs. Browning donated the windmill to the


\textsuperscript{118} Janet Langston, “Her Project Planned so Blind ‘See’ Nature,” \textit{Living Today Section of The Compass}, 5 November 1976, NBG Standing Files.
Garden along with $150 to cover repair costs. Upon visiting the windmill at the garden for the first time Mrs. Browning commented: “The windmill looks so bright and clean, and the tulips are lovely. It should be here for everyone to enjoy. My husband would like that.” The windmill remained at the Garden for several years until it was removed due to deterioration.

Another addition was the Bicentennial Rose Garden. This project began with an idea from G.H. Ferguson, former president of the Tidewater Rose Society in 1973. The society wanted to plant a rose garden featuring old favorite rose varieties and new All American Rose Selection winners. The project was one that Huette had envisioned earlier in his career, and when Mathews heard about the Rose Society’s interests, the project concept was renewed. In 1974, the city and the Rose Society began work on a three-and-one-half-acre site across the canal from the NATO Tower, currently adjacent to Baker Hall. The city designed the layouts and plans for this garden, constructed paths, and an irrigation system. The Rose Society donated 800 roses. In 1976 the garden was dedicated as, The Bicentennial Rose Garden. Today, the garden displays over 4,000 roses representing 250 different types as well as the All-American Rose Selections. An All-American Rose Garden means that the garden has been selected to grow and display the newest breeds of roses. These gardens act as “test gardens” and are required to anonymously care for all the new breeds until a winner is announced. There are only 120 All-American Rose Gardens in the United States. Recently the Bicentennial Rose

120 Ibid.
Garden underwent renovations by landscape architects, Siska Aurauand. The renovations included the construction of an arbor in the center of the garden.\textsuperscript{123}

The last blow to the Garden came in July 1977. It was at this time that Norfolk City Council eliminated the curator position at the Norfolk Botanical Garden. The elimination meant the end of George W. Baker's involvement at the Garden. The decision was purely economical. The city cited that the garden already had a Superintendent, Bob Matthews, and therefore did not need two managerial positions. Baker was awarded three months salary from federal antirecession funds. In order to retain Baker, Norfolk Botanical Garden Society offered to pay half his salary, $20,800, for the nine months remaining until the end of the fiscal year.\textsuperscript{124}

MATTHEWS YEARS

Having lost the curator of the Garden, Matthews was left as the sole manager of the entire area. In 1983, the Garden released an elaborate plan for a conservatory. The concept of the conservatory had long been passed around. Even during the airport expansion, redevelopment funds were slated to include construction of a conservatory. However, it was Matthews who envisioned a glass conservatory placed directly over a canal. This would allow visitors to enter the Conservatory on the Garden's boat tour. The plans included a main rotunda, which would span 100 feet over the canal, and be 40 feet tall. The Conservatory would feature 40-by-100-foot wings to each side and be closed and heated during winter months. In 1983, The Gardens began a 3 million


\textsuperscript{124} "Group Offers Part of Curator's Salary," \textit{Virginian Pilot}, 2 September 1977, NBG Standing Files.
campaign to add a conservatory. This project would fulfill the one lacking feature at the
garden, a winter attraction, such as a greenhouse. According to George Matton, former
president of the Greenhouse Study Group, “The botanical garden, we feel, is one of the
finest on the East Coast or in the United States, for that matter. But to be honest with
you, it has a lousy greenhouse – just a small little thing.” The Garden's greenhouse
was used to house orchids and measured a mere 35-by-100 feet. Matthews’s plan would
have been a drastic improvement. Unfortunately, unable to raise the necessary funds,
the Garden abandoned the project.

In 1988, Matthews retired as Superintendent of the Garden after 38 years of
service. He began as a basic garden worker making $1.00 an hour: he took a $0.25
hourly pay cut to work at the Garden. During the entire time, he only took off two days
for illness. Matthews’s presence in the Garden is noted in several important features.
First, it was his vision to fill 27 vacant acres with a Flowering Arboretum. This
Arboretum includes a pear tree planted for every mayor of the city of Norfolk, known as
Mayor’s Row. Matthews also turned the Azalea Court into the Renaissance Court that is
known today. He planned the grass-covered tiers and the 1,500 concrete balusters that
frame them. He scoured the city for anything he could salvage, including the downtown
Bank Fountain that he restored and placed in the Renaissance Garden. In 1979,
Matthews formed the Norfolk Botanical Garden Foundation, a non-profit organization
dedicated to fund-raising for the garden.

126 Mayfield, NBG Standing Files.
127 Ibid.
Matthews's last contribution to the Garden is the Tropical Display House (now known as the Tropical Pavilion) constructed in 1988-89. The Tropical Display House is adjacent to the Japanese Garden and replaces the older greenhouse. Matthews called this a Display House rather than a greenhouse because his plans included a vast array of colors. The project cost $36,000 plus labor. The Tropical Display house features 25-foot palm trees planted in a five-foot pit dug in the center of the building. The roof is 33-feet high. A cascading waterfall fills an 8-foot wide, 14-inch pool centrally located in the Display House. The Tropical Display House features a yearlong collection of unique and exotic plants.129

RECENT EVENTS AT THE GARDEN

In April of 1992, the Garden again attempted to launch a major renovation plan. The design, by English designer Anthony Walmsley, would cost $10.4 million dollars. The plan included four phases of development aimed at making the Garden a self-supporting entity. The first phases would include commercially gainful elements such as construction of a visitors' center, gift shop, market, a new fragrance garden, a children's garden with a maze and new entrance gate. As a highlight of the final project, Walmsley included Matthews's glass conservatory at a $6.6 million estimated cost. Walmsley wanted his design to reflect two concepts: education and environmental awareness.130 According to Peter Frederick, Superintendent, "The most important thing in the whole

process is creating an effective educational program."\textsuperscript{131} The project would begin fundraising in 1993, and construction in 1994, and it would take nearly two decades to complete.\textsuperscript{132} In December 1992, the Garden received a $1 million dollar memorial donation to begin construction on the visitor’s center. In order to receive the donation the Garden was required to get $1 million dollars in matching funds.\textsuperscript{133}

In 1995, the Garden opened its new visitor’s center named, Baker Hall, after their generous donor Isaac Mitchell “Junie” Baker Jr. Baker also provided the Garden with an additional endowment fund in 1995. The fund annually disperses money to maintain and plant new plants around Baker Overlook, Baker Hall, and the Sarah Lee Baker Perennial Garden.\textsuperscript{134}

In addition, in 1995 the Japanese Garden underwent a massive $175,000 renovation. The garden was originally designed in 1962. In May 1989, the Japanese Garden was rededicated as Kitakyushu Park. The name represents Norfolk’s sister-city, Kitakyushu, Japan, and commemorates the thirtieth anniversary of their NATO relationship. The Garden had planned to spend $132,000 on the restoration; however, an additional $40,000 was donated by the local Japanese community. Bill Pinkham, owner of Smithfield Gardens, designed the new garden. He incorporated the traditional Japanese elements of water, stone, and plants into his design. Smithfield Gardens provided many of the trees for the garden, some of which are over 25 years old. The

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid.
completion of the restoration was simultaneously planned with the opening of the Baker Hall Visitors' Center.\(^\text{135}\)

While it may seem that The Bakers have been the most generous supporters of the garden, contributing funds for construction and maintenance of several gardens, nothing compares to their final endowment. In 2002, Sarah Lee Kirby Baker passed away and left the Garden $10 million dollars. In 2003, the I.M. Baker Endowment Fund was created.\(^\text{136}\) Upon receipt of the donation, Norfolk Botanical Garden Foundation president, Patricia Rawls commented:

\begin{quote}
This takes the garden to another level. It will enable the hiring of more people to work with children and the creation of better programs and more classes, and even pay for additional gardeners and flowers to make it a better attraction. For someone to invest this amount of money in their community is just wonderful. It will really make a difference.\(^\text{137}\)
\end{quote}

The most recent development at the Norfolk Botanical Garden is directly related to this thesis. On June 1, 2005 the original 30-acres of the Norfolk Botanical Garden were listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register by the Virginia State Review Board and their designation on the National Register of Historic Places was approved in December. This area of the Garden is considered historic due to the continued maintenance of the original WPA design as well as the significant role it played in African American and Women's History.\(^\text{138}\) Today the Garden is in the early stages of commissioning a sculpture to commemorate the original garden workers. The competition will be open to

\(^{135}\) Williams, NBG Standing Files.


\(^{137}\) Germanotta, A11, NBG Standing Files.

the public and the sculpture will be located on a site next to Mirror Lake in the historic acres of the Garden. It is tentatively planned to be dedicated at the 70th Anniversary of the Garden in 2008.139

As a further means to capture the rich history of the Garden, the children of Ruffner Academy’s Community Action Group have completed an oral history project entitled D.I.R.T. or “Digging into Repressed Times.” This project records the history of the original garden workers through video-recorded interviews of an original garden worker and the descendants’ of several other garden workers. The project was submitted into local, state, and international competitions. In June, their efforts won the International competition, thus sharing the history of the Norfolk Botanical Garden with people from around the world.140

140 Ibid.
Like art, landscape architecture is based on several elements and principles of design. The elements that make up a garden can include plants and fruits, water features for aesthetics as well as irrigation, manmade objects to add interest, and proper light and shade. Of course, garden design must also take into account limitations presented by local geography and topography, as well as, functional and cultural demands. Successful garden designs are often noted for their ability to balance nature and man; to include the human scale within their design, while never overshadowing the presence of nature.  

The Norfolk Botanical Garden is a compilation of garden design styles. The garden boasts over 20 themed gardens and an annual attendance of 230,000. The Garden provides visitors the opportunity to experience these gardens on foot, tram, or boat via its elaborate system of walking trails and manmade canals. The need for movement and transitions throughout the entire 158 acres is incorporated completely within the garden.

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The ability of a garden design to create a sense of place is paramount. Gardens are intended to provide a sanctuary, a place to contemplate, dine, gather, play, or work. In order to illustrate successfully a sense of place one has to understand the finer details of the plan. Elements such as paving, water features, benches, corridors, or vertical inclines all create a different atmosphere. The Norfolk Botanical Garden has found a way to create many different atmospheres on its grounds and the proper tools to bind the different garden varieties into a cohesive plan.

The following portion of my thesis will discuss the design elements present within each of the individual gardens. Special attention will be given to the history of several gardens, which are directly tied to local history, specifically the original 30-acres. I will also discuss the buildings present at the garden, their design in relation to function as well as impact on the garden. Several recent photographs will accompany each description. These photographs can be found following the description of each of the gardens. A map of the Norfolk Botanical Garden can be referenced in Appendix A.

MIRROR LAKE AND WPA ACRES

The Norfolk Botanical Garden is located in Norfolk, Virginia on the east side of Azalea Garden Road between Norview Avenue and Little Creek Road. It is accessed by an asphalt-paved entrance road that crosses over Lake Wright via a manmade causeway. (fig. 3) The original acreage is located to the south of the entrance road and surrounds Mirror Lake. The current boundary of the original acreage is defined by the entrance road on the north and a chain-link fence on both the south and the east. The south side of

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the property is located directly adjacent to the Norfolk International Airport. (fig 4)

There is an entrance on the airport side, which allows pedestrians to enter the garden free of charge. (fig.5) The west boundary is formed by a manmade causeway, which separates Mirror Lake from Lake Wright. (fig. 6)

The original 30 acres were developed under the Works Progress Administration. These acres exhibit the naturalistic and wilderness trends in landscape design. The naturalistic and wilderness trends are expressed through non-formal, picturesque views that emphasize passive recreation and pride in local flora. The area is comprised of the flat, grass-covered land encircling Mirror Lake. Mature pines shade the original, WPA-era azalea bushes that line the walking trail. (fig. 8) The asphalt-paved, walking trail allows visitors the opportunity for passive recreation while experiencing the picturesque views around the lake and Norfolk’s collection of azaleas. Appendix B features a series of historic photographs that illustrate the evolution of the walking trail from 1938 to 1954. Water lilies cover portions of the Mirror Lake. (figs. 9-10) In addition, a short peninsula juts into Mirror Lake on the southeast corner of the original garden. The peninsula can be accessed by pedestrians but it does not feature a defined or paved trail. The peninsula is an example of how the Garden’s design has left natural features untouched in a wilderness state, yet open for exploration. There is a small freshwater spring located to the south of the entrance road northeast of Mirror Lake.

The choice of azaleas as the focus of the Garden is directly related to their popularity and ability to be grown in the South. It was the popularity of azaleas that kept the Charleston Azalea Garden in South Carolina open and profitable during the Great

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5 McClelland.
Depression. The collection of azalea bushes at the Norfolk Botanical Garden have created so much local pride that their peak blooming period is the stage for the annual International Azalea Festival. The azaleas are an example of local flora creating local pride, and such planting choices are advocated in naturalistic and wilderness landscape designs.

The naturalistic and wilderness trends in landscape designs were often implemented by the National Park Service through federal programs including the WPA and the Civilian Conservation Corps. While the Norfolk Botanical Gardens began as a smaller project than a national park, it maintains its integrity to the naturalistic and wilderness designs associated with the National Park Service during the time of its creation.

The original 30 acres are comprised of several distinct features including two manmade causeways, a water fountain, the entrance gate/attendant’s booth, and utility building. The two manmade causeways were present before the development of the Garden. The entrance causeway, which crosses over Lake Wright, is accessed from Azalea Garden Road. The road winds as it approaches the Garden providing a sense of travel into a new place. It is two lanes and is asphalt-paved. The second causeway defines the west perimeter of original acres. This causeway separates Mirror Lake from Lake Wright. It is a single lane wide and is asphalt-paved.

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6 Thomas P. Thompson to Joe Bobbitt, 26 August 1938, Thompson Records.
8 McClelland.
9 Ibid.
The current entrance gate was constructed in 1973. It is located on the entrance road just past the entrance causeway. The entrance gate, measuring 13'-6" in height, covers the two-lane entrance road and includes an attendant's booth and metal gates. The gate is freestanding with a concrete slab foundation and double wood piers that support the asphalt-shingled, hipped roof. The attendant's booth is one-story with a concrete slab foundation and a wood frame structural system. The booth is clad in vertical board siding and features decorative stone veneer on the base. It has an asphalt-shingled, hipped roof. There is a single-leaf wood door on the north elevation and a metal sliding window on the south elevation.

There is a one-story utility building located to the southwest of the entrance gate, just past the Lake Wright causeway. The utility building is designed in the Modern Movement style and constructed circa 1980. It incorporates a concrete slab foundation and concrete block structural system clad in brick veneer. The utility building houses hydraulic equipment and has virtually no impact on the surrounding landscape design.

The most significant feature of the original garden acres is the walking trail that encircles the entire perimeter of Mirror Lake. The original trail has been paved with asphalt but still remains in its original location. There is a stone-clad water fountain located on the walking trail to the north of the causeway between Mirror Lake and Lake Wright. The water fountain was constructed circa 1945. In 2008, a site in the historic acres of the garden will be home to a memorial honoring the original WPA workers. (fig. 11)
Figure 3. Entrance Gate and Causeway. Norfolk Botanical Garden. April 2004. Photo by Author.

Figure 4. Norfolk Botanical Garden and Norfolk International Airport. April 2004. Photo by Author.

Figure 5. Entrance to the Garden from Norfolk International Airport. April 2004. Photo by Author.
Figure 6. Lake Wright Causeway. Norfolk Botanical Garden. April 2004. Photo by Author.

Figure 7. Walking Trail and Entrance Road. Norfolk Botanical Garden. April 2004. Photo by Author.

Figure 8. Azaleas in Bloom. Norfolk Botanical Garden. Photo Courtesy of Norfolk Botanical Garden.


Figure 11. Site for Planned Memorial to WPA Workers. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

The Administration Building is an International style building designed by Norfolk Architect Vernon A. Moore in 1961. It is comprised of a two-story rotunda flanked by one-story wings in a V-plan. (figs. 12-13) The north wing holds the Garden’s offices and the south wing originally held a lecture hall.¹⁰ (fig. 14) The building features a concrete slab foundation and a concrete block structural system clad in cobblestone veneer. The cobblestones were salvaged from Norfolk city streets. The rotunda features a circular roof constructed with reinforced concrete, in a fold-plate design. The entrance portion of the rotunda features individual bays corresponding to the folds of the roof. Each bay features cobblestone veneer panels flanked by metal, casement windows. The primary entrance is centrally located on the rotunda. It is comprised of double leaf, plate glass doors surmounted by transoms. Surmounting the primary entrance is a projecting overhang that forms a beltcourse between the first and second stories of the building. In 1967, the individual bays of the rear portion of the rotunda were replaced with glass to provide a panoramic view of the garden and allow visitors access to the boat tours.¹¹ (fig. 15) However, the plan was altered and today the rear of the rotunda features a terrace flanked by the Fragrance and Sunken Gardens. It features a curved, stone double staircase that descends to the Tram Circle. (fig. 16) This building is a good example of the International style of architecture present in Norfolk.

¹¹ "New Glass Wall Planned at Gardens," NBG Standing Files.


SUNKEN GARDEN AND FRAGRANCE GARDEN

In April 1964, the area behind the Gardens newly dedicated Administration Building became known as the Fragrance Garden for the Blind.\textsuperscript{12} (fig. 13) This garden features scented flowers including roses, magnolia, chive, marjoram, peppermint, thyme, lemon balm, arbutus, and gardenias. The walkway is studded with marble chips. The garden also features a serpentine wall with plant nameplates in Braille, and a small pond.

\textsuperscript{12}“Garden for Blind Open in April,” NBG Standing Files.
(fig. 18) The garden is handicapped-friendly with handrails to assist the visually impaired. 13

The Fragrance Garden near the Administration Building was acclaimed for its unique design catering to the blind. This garden was rededicated in 1964. It was originally planned in 1956 by Julia Oswald. The garden was to be developed to two phases. The first being the garden itself, the second was “Sculptures of Nature’s Living Things” to be placed inside the Administration Building. The second phases included bas-relief sculptures of plants and animals that could be physically handled by the blind. These sculptures would give them the opportunity to “see” nature. The second phase of this project was completed in 1976. 14

Established by the Redwood Garden Club of Norfolk in 1963, the Sunken Garden is located at the western end of Fragrance Garden behind the Administration Building. 15 (fig. 19) The Sunken Garden features a small pond with a nymph water feature. (fig. 21) The Sunken Garden is home to the rare Hong Kong camellia. 16 In 1967 a large, circular was dug into the terrace behind the Administration Building between the Fragrance Garden and the Sunken Garden, thus visually connecting the two gardens. 17 (fig.20)
Figure 17. Fragrance Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. March 2006. Photo by Author.


Figure 21. Sunken Garden Fountain. Norfolk Botanical Garden. March 2006. Photo by Author.
TEA HOUSE, RESTROOM FACILITY, AND TROPICAL PAVILION

In addition to the Administration Building, a Tea House and Restroom facility were designed in the same variation of the International style by the Vernon Moore.\(^{18}\) The idea of a Tea House came from Fred Huette who was inspired by a tea house at the famed Kew Gardens in England. The Tea House is a 3,800 square foot, one-story building with a round floor plan.\(^{19}\) (figs. 22-24) It incorporates a concrete slab foundation and a concrete block structural system clad in cobblestone veneer. The Tea House features a fold-plate roof and a terrace overlooking the Japanese garden.

The Restroom facility is located between the Administration Building and Tea House. (fig. 25) It incorporates a concrete slab foundation and concrete block structural system clad in cobblestone veneer. The restrooms have separate entrances for each of the sexes. The windows are partially covered by \textit{bris-soleil}. The roof also exhibits the same folded-plate design of the other buildings. The cost of the three buildings was approximately $250,000.

In 1988-89 the Tropical Display House replaced an older greenhouse on a lot adjacent to the Japanese Garden and Tea House. (fig.26) Bob Matthews, Superintendent of the garden called this a Display House rather than a greenhouse because his plans included a vast array of colors. The project cost $36,000 plus labor. The Tropical Display house features 25-foot palm trees planted in a five-foot pit dug in the center of the building. The roof is 33-feet high. A cascading waterfall fills an 8-foot wide, 14-inch pool centrally located in the Display House. The Tropical Display House features a

\(^{18}\) "Botanical Gardens Tea House Construction Plans Ready," NBG Standing Files.
\(^{19}\) "6 Bid on Teahouse," NBG Standing Files.
yearlong collection of unique and exotic plants. Today the Tropical Display House is referred to as the Tropical Pavilion.


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20 McCormack, 22, NBG Standing Files.


JAPANESE GARDEN – KITAKYUSHU PARK

The Japanese Garden at the Norfolk Botanical Gardens began in 1962. The garden was designed by Nancy Timmons, local Portsmouth landscaper. She included various Japanese elements such as water features and a bamboo fence in her plan. The Garden was located behind the Tea House next to the Boat Basin.\(^{21}\)

In 1989, the garden was renamed as Kitakyushu Park. This is the name of Norfolk’s sister-city in Japan. Plans to renovate the garden soon followed. In 1995, the garden had $134,000 to go towards the renovation. The local Japanese community donated additional $40,000. This allowed for a $174,000 renovation.

The renovation design was completed by Bill Pinkham, a nursery owner in Smithfield. Pinkham incorporated the three traditional elements of Japanese gardens in his design: stone, water, and plants. He paid close attention to detail, and sculpted the garden as if it were a miniature landscape complete with lakes and mountains. The garden is bordered from the outside by densely planted bamboo. This gives the illusion of protection rather than confinement. Pinkham, owner of the Smithfield Nursery, planted several trees that he had at his nursery; some were nearly 25 years old. The presence of such developed trees creates the illusion that this garden has been there for decades.\(^{22}\)

Individual resources to the garden include a Zen garden located next to the Tea House terrace. The entrance to the garden is located to the north from Baker Hall and the Boat Basin. The entrance is comprised of a stucco-clad, concrete block wall surmounted by a traditional Japanese roof. (fig. 27) A centrally located pond features a waterfall and

\(^{21}\) Williams, NBG Standing Files.  
\(^{22}\) Ibid.
stone footbridge. The pond is filled with *coi*. (fig 28) There is an ornamental Japanese lantern located near the water feature. Located to the left of the entrance is a bas-relief rededication plaque commemorating the 30-year partnership between Norfolk and Kitakyushu, Japan. (fig 30)

Another resource within the Japanese Garden is located just within the entrance. It is a *Shishi-Odoshi* fountain, or deer-chaser. (fig. 31) These fountains were originally used by Japanese farmers to scare away deer and wild boar from the rice crops, and later became part of many Japanese gardens. The regular hollow knocking sound combined with the sound of running water complements the serenity of this garden today. As water flows into the end of the *Shishi-Odoshi*, the pivoted length of bamboo becomes full of water. The weight of water then causes the pivot to tip forward, emptying the contents back into the pool, whilst the hollow rear end hits a conveniently placed rock when it returns to its primary position. This causes the regular knocking sound, which is very effective at scaring away animals and at creating a meditative atmosphere in modern Japanese gardens. 23

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Figure 27. Entrance to Japanese Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.


SENSORY GARDEN

The Sensory Garden, located adjacent to the Baker Hall Visitor's Center, was constructed circa 2001. This garden features an array of plants to enlighten the senses via color, texture, and smell. It bears striking similarity to the Fragrance Garden, first deemed the Garden for the Blind, located behind the Administration Building.

This garden is laid out along the northeast elevation of Baker Hall and the entrance to Rose Garden Hall. (fig. 32) Flowerbeds flank a brick paved walking path, featuring memorial bricks for important individuals and donors of the Norfolk Botanical Garden. There is an elevated square bed centrally located near the northeast entrance of Baker Hall. This bed is comprised of a concrete block foundation clad in brick veneer. The flowerbeds feature plants rooted in the soil, mixed with various potted plants in large, multi-colored ceramic pots. The east portion of the garden features three ceramic

sculptures created for the garden in 2002-2004 by artists, Barbara Kobylinska. (fig. 33) These sculptures are currently valued at $7,000.25

In the summer of 2004, the Sensory Garden was home to a rare, giant Agave plant. This particular plant was over 20 years old, and was preparing to bloom its first and final bloom. Agave plants bloom once and then die, making this a special flowering event. This giant Agave plant grew almost a foot a day and reached nearly 30 feet tall with multiple tiers of pale yellow leaves. The plant, a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Frank Tuck of Virginia Beach, was donated and replanted at the garden for only a year before it bloomed. While the garden has replaced the now deceased giant Agave, the new Agave plant will only grow to be three feet tall.26

Figure 32. Sensory Garden and Baker Hall. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.

BAKER HALL VISITOR CENTER/GARDEN EDUCATION AND CONFERENCE CENTER

Baker Hall Visitor Center Garden Education and Conference Center is a one-story building designed in the Modern Movement style and constructed in 1993. (figs. 34-35) The building incorporates a concrete-slab foundation and a concrete block structural system clad in rusticated stone veneer. The building is accessed via a centrally located, one bay pavilion that projects from the main building. The pavilion features multiple piers partially clad in stone veneer supporting a 5-part truss system. (fig. 36) The roof is front gable, clad in asphalt shingles with exposed rafters. The primary entrance to the building is comprised of four, single-leaf, plate glass doors surmounted by fixed plate glass transoms. The entrance pavilion is repeated on the northwest elevation of the building. (fig. 37) The northwest pavilion overlooks the canals and features 8000 square feet of terrace overlooking the canal and Perennial Garden. (fig. 38) The terrace features stairs accessing the Jane Dallas Wood Memorial Arbor. (fig. 39) The building
features fixed plate glass windows. The central pavilions on the exterior form what is formally named Baker Hall on the interior. (fig. 40) This room is oversized with wood and stone piers, high ceilings, exposed truss work and skylights along the roof apex. Baker Hall is 2,442 square feet. The ticket and exhibition area of the building are located to the east of Baker Hall, and the gift Shop and restrooms are located to the south. Adjacent to the exhibition area is the Holly Room designed to accommodate small meetings or event overflow. The Holly room is 1,024 square feet and features oversized, plate glass windows with views of the Sensory Garden. (fig. 41)

The northeast portion of Baker Hall Visitor Center/Garden Education and Conference Center houses the Education Department, garden library, Rose Garden Hall, and the Magnolia and Camellia conference rooms. (fig. 42) Rose Garden Hall overlooks the Bicentennial Rose Garden. It is 4,000 square feet and features an adjustable floor plan with closed partitions on each end of the room. Rose Garden Hall is designed for party functions and features a catering kitchen, service entrance, and adjacent parking. The unobstructed view of the Rose Garden is further complemented by the three connecting gazebos appended to the north elevation. (fig. 43) The gazebos feature concrete-slab foundations, and wood frame-structural systems. They are octagonal-shaped with turned, wood posts, brackets, and spindlework. The roofs are octagonal, standing seam metal. The central gazebo features an octagonal lantern with 9-light windows. The central gazebo is flanked by two gazebo attached via small, gable-roofed

29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
covered walkways. (fig. 44) The Magnolia and Camellia rooms are designed for classes. They consist of 8 x 20 rooms separated by a divider. These rooms feature blackboards, efficiency kitchens, and a view of the water.31

In December 1992, the garden received a $1 million dollar memorial donation to begin construction on the visitor's center. In order to receive the donation the garden was required to secure $1 million dollars in matching funds. The funds were donated by Isaac Mitchell “Junie” Baker, Jr.32 Therefore, at the 1995 dedication of the building it was named Baker Hall Visitor Center/Garden Education and Conference Center.

Baker Hall also features a sunken water fountain at the main entrance. (fig. 45) The fountain consists of jagged slabs of granite loosely arranged in a circular pattern. Within three of these granite slabs are gerbe waterspouts.33 The spouts shoot water up and allow into it fall over the granite slabs into the sunken pool below. Located next to the fountain is a mermaid sculpture, entitled Seasonal Maid, by artist Amy Tardy. (fig. 46) The sculpture, valued at $2,000, was designed in conjugation with the Mermaids on Parade Campaign. The campaign commissioned cast-mermaid sculptures to be painted with original designs by local artists and sold at auction. The proceeds from the auction are used to support the arts within the city of Norfolk. 34

31 Ibid.
32 “Mystery Donation Gives Norfolk Rosy Future,” NBG Standing Files.
Figure 34. Baker Hall. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.


Figure 36. Baker Hall, Entrance Detail. Norfolk Botanical Garden. Photo Courtesy of Norfolk Botanical Garden.
Figure 37. Baker Hall, Southeast Elevation. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.

Figure 38. Looking Northwest from Baker Hall Terrace to Jane Dallas Wood Memorial Arbor. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.

Figure 40. Baker Hall Interior. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.

Figure 41. Baker Hall Main Floor Plan. Norfolk Botanical Garden. Plan Courtesy of Norfolk Botanical Garden.
Figure 42. Baker Hall, West Wing Floor Plan with Rose Garden Hall and the Magnolia and Camellia Conference Rooms. Norfolk Botanical Garden. Plan Courtesy of Norfolk Botanical Garden.


Figure 44. Baker Hall Gazebo. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.
Figure 45. Baker Hall Fountain. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.

SARAH LEE BAKER PERENNIAL GARDEN

The Sarah Lee Baker Perennial Garden is a one-acre garden located just west of the Tram Circle behind the Administration Building. The garden design was created by Siska/Aurand Landscape Architects, Inc. of Norfolk. The garden is designed in a formal style. It includes various resources that add to the area’s contemplative nature. The garden is set in a cross-hairs plan with a strong axis that bisects to concentric circles. The axis is defined by brick pavers and an extensive five-part water feature. (fig. 47) The water feature consists of the central fountain flanked on either side of the axis by three-tiered water basins. The basins while not connected to the fountain itself or to the other basins create the illusion of movement, as if the water were water flowing down from the central fountain. The two concentric circles consist of an inner and an outer circle. The inner circle is comprised of an elaborate water fountain. (fig. 48) The outer circle is defined by a grass-covered circular corridor flanked by plant beds. (fig. 49) The south portion of the outer circle features a wood arbor with benches for seating. (fig 50) This garden highlights woody ornamental shrubs, annuals, and over 200 varieties of perennials.

The garden is named for Sarah Lee Baker, a Norfolk resident who was highly active within the community. Sarah Lee Baker and her husband Isaac M. Baker, Jr. supported the Garden since its opening in 1938. The Bakers, then a newly married couple, found the Garden to be one of Norfolk’s most peaceful sanctuaries. During the years that followed, the Baker’s presence within the Norfolk community of Lakewood grew. Isaac served as the president of the Lakewood Civic League, while Sarah was

president of the Lakewood Garden Club. At the 1962 dedication of the Garden’s new Administration Building and Tea House, Sarah Baker and the Lakewood Garden Club unveiled an oil portrait of Garden Superintendent, Fred Huette. In addition, the Lakewood Civic League presented national and city flags to the Garden for display in the Administration Building rotunda.\textsuperscript{36} In 1995, the Bakers donated $1 million dollars towards the Garden’s capital campaign for garden restoration.\textsuperscript{37} Upon Mrs. Baker’s death in 2002, an additional $10 million dollars was donated to the Garden.\textsuperscript{38} In honor of their generous gifts, the Bakers’ presence can be noted within such areas of the Garden as the Sarah Lee Perennial Garden, Baker Hall, and Baker Overlook.

Figure 47. Sarah Lee Baker Perennial Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.

\textsuperscript{36} Paschang, NBG Standing Files. \\
\textsuperscript{37} “Mystery Donation Gives Norfolk Rosy Future,” NBG Standing Files. \\
\textsuperscript{38} McCaskey, NBG Standing Files.
Figure 48. Sarah Lee Baker Perennial Garden Fountain. Norfolk Botanical Garden. Photo Courtesy of Norfolk Botanical Garden.


HOLLY GARDEN AND TURNER SCULPTURE GARDEN

The Holly Garden and Turner Sculpture Garden are located to the south of Renaissance Court. The garden, a donation of the Lakewood Garden Club, began in the 1950s features 121 varieties of hollies. (fig. 51) The hollies are planted in three groups, American, English, and Japanese. The area provides the habitats for many of the Garden’s birds and other animals.  

Special features of the garden include its original wood sign inscribed “Lakewood Garden Club Holly Garden.” (fig. 52) This garden is also home to eight bronze statues depicting wildlife. (figs. 53-60) The statues are the work of Eastern Shore artists, William and David Turner. The dates of these statues range from 1995 to 2000 and the entire collection is valued at $22,900. Each statue is located on a solid concrete base with a brass plaque dedicating the sculpture donor or memorializing the figure for another individual.  

Near the entrance to the garden is an elevated pond with a spouting frog water feature. (fig. 61)

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40 “Norfolk Botanical Garden Sculpture Inventory.”

Figure 52. Holly Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.


RENAISSANCE COURT

The Renaissance Court at the Norfolk Botanical Garden was one on the projects that began during the Garden’s 1958 expansion. It was completed in 1984.41 This garden features stylistic elements from the Early Renaissance, High Renaissance, and Baroque periods including an emphasis on views inside and outside of the garden’s perimeter, decorative sculpture, and areas for outdoor socialization.42 The garden features an axial plan that is bisected into two separate areas via the asphalt-paved walking trail. A seating area is located to the north.

The east area consists of a three-tiered, terraced lawn. (fig. 62) The lawn features symmetrical, grass-covered terraces edged with stonewalls and each level is defined by concrete-cast balusters. The upper most level of the lawn features four bust statues depicting the seasons at each corner. (fig. 63) The artist of these statues is unknown; however, they were donated to the Garden in the 1960s from a Suffolk, Virginia plantation and were originally located in the Fragrance Garden behind the Administration Building.43 The collection is valued at approximately $12,000.44 The terraced lawn features a central axis leading to the Holly Garden/Lakewood Sculpture Garden to the east. The stairs feature concrete balusters surmounted by four urns on each side.

Located to the west of the terraces is an elaborate water feature. (fig. 64) The water feature is comprised of a large reflecting pool with a centrally located *arbre d’eau* fountain, which expels water in a tree-like branching spray.45 (fig. 65) Sculpted stone

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41 Lackey, 21-22, NBG Standing Files.
43 Lackey, 22, NBG Standing Files.
44 "Norfolk Botanical Garden Sculpture Inventory."
lions that spout water from their mouths line a shallow water basin in front of the reflecting pool. (fig. 66) The backdrop to this water feature is a grand coronation court. Every April, during the International Azalea Festival, the Norfolk Botanical Garden uses this site to crown its annual Azalea Queen. The coronation court features several varieties of plants and trees including elephant ears and palms. Some of the plants are displayed in large, ceramic pots on the walking trail. Centrally located on the coronation court is a freestanding, stone, and wrought iron gate. (fig. 67) The gate is surmounted by metal urns and a medallion featuring a replica of the Norfolk Mace. (fig. 68) The medallion reads “The International Azalea Festival.” The gate, dedicated in 1961, was presented to the Garden by the Tidewater Federation of Garden Clubs to honor the memory of World War II Veterans. (fig. 69) The placement of gate visually maintains the central axis of the Renaissance Court to the Statuary Vista located to the west.

To the north of the Renaissance Court is a circular seating area that features a large, gerbe water fountain known as the Bank Fountain. (fig. 70) The Bank Fountain was designed by D & W Turner and was presented to the Garden by the First Virginia Bank. It is currently valued at $11,200. A gerbe fountain is noted for having an “airy pyramid of tumbling drops.” This fountain possess such as spout as well as a cascade. The gerbe spout empties water into a decorative basin, which then overflows and cascades down to a larger basin. (fig. 71) The decorative scalloped edges of the upper basin allow the water to cascade in a natural, fractured form and catch light. The base of the fountain is carved with decorative scrolls and a tri-part fish motif. The fountain

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46 Lackey, 22, NBG Standing Files.
47 “Norfolk Botanical Garden Sculpture Inventory.”
features a concrete slab foundation encircled by stone benches. This portion of the Renaissance Court expresses a slightly more intimate approach to outdoor gathering spaces than the terraced lawn and coronation court.

Figure 63. Bust Statue in Renaissance Court. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.

Figure 64. View to Renaissance Court from Coronation Gate. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.
Figure 65. Fountain at Renaissance Court. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.

Figure 66. Fountain at Renaissance Court, Lion Spout Detail. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.

Figure 67. Gate at Renaissance Court from Statuary Vista. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.
Figure 68. Medallion on Gate at Renaissance Court. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.

Figure 69. Dedication Plaque on Gate at Renaissance Court. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.

STATUARY VISTA

The Statuary Vista is a 100 x 500-foot flowering vista located to the west of the Renaissance court. It is comprised of a single-axis that extends from the coronation gate of the Renaissance court to Lake Wright. (fig. 72) The garden features eleven marble statues on concrete bases placed in mulch-covered, perennial flowerbeds. A dense planting of mature trees serves as a backdrop to the statues. (fig. 73) The Statuary Vista was created in 1962-63.49

The Statuary Vista features eleven statutes depicting the famous artists Rembrandt, Titian, Raphael, Durer, Da Vinci, Phidias, Rubens, Crawford, Canova, Michelangelo, and Murillo. (fig. 74-84) These seven-foot statues were carved from Carrara marble by Sir Moses Ezekiel in Rome between 1879-1884. The complete collection is valued at $150,000.50 In addition to the artist statues, there is a granite eagle statue located at the end of the Statuary Vista next to Lake Wright. (fig. 85) The eagle was donated to the Garden and is 4-feet tall with a wingspan of six feet. The artist of the eagle is unknown. The Eagle statue serves as a focal point of the view from the Renaissance Court.51 As a result of this donation, the Garden established a Fine Arts Committee of Norfolk Botanical Garden to better care for their growing collection of outdoor art. Today the Garden possesses 37 pieces of art located throughout the entire Garden.52

49 Third Annual Report Norfolk Botanical Gardens.
50 “Norfolk Botanical Garden Sculpture Inventory.”
51 “City Given 7 Statues,” NBG Standing Files.
52 Third Annual Report Norfolk Botanical Gardens.
Figure 72. Statuary Vista from Renaissance Court. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.

Figure 73. Statuary Vista Looking to Renaissance Court. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.


HOFHEIMER CAMELLIA GARDEN

The Hofheimer Camellia Garden is located to the south of the Renaissance Court and adjacent to Friendship Pond. It features a mulch-covered walking path that weaves between planned flowerbeds, wood benches, and mature trees. (fig. 86) This garden honors the memory of Alan J. and Aline F. Hofheimer, founding members of the Virginia Camellia Society. With a gift from the Hofheimer’s children and Mr. Hofheimer’s law partners, the garden was dedicated in 1992.53 (fig. 87) This garden displays over 450 varieties of camellias, including classic camellia plantings as well as newer cultivars that have proven successful in this region’s climate. Specific types of camellias that can be found in the Camellia Garden are varieties of *Camellia japonica* and *Camellia*

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In 1997, the camellia collection at the Norfolk Botanical Garden was named an Official North American Collection by the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta's North American Plant Collection Consortium. There are only ten National Collection holders designated by the NAPCC, and Hofheimer Camellia Collection is one of only two found in the United States.\textsuperscript{55}

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FRIENDSHIP POND

Friendship Pond is located to the north as one enters the Garden’s main entrance. It is nestled between the Hofheimer Camellia Garden and the Kaufman Hydrangea Garden. (fig. 88) The pond was constructed in ca 1958 when the Garden planned a lagoon. The lagoon is now known as Friendship Pond. It features the tallest water feature in the Garden. (fig. 89) In the near future, this waterspout will provide a direct line-of-sight between the new and historic acres of the Garden. By 2008, the Garden hopes to have a memorial sculpture located in the historic acres of the Garden that will be on an axis with the spout in Friendship Pond. Adjacent to Friendship Pond normally rests the Dancing Girls sculpture; however, this sculpture is currently under restoration.

Figure 88. Friendship Pond. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.

56 "Work Begun on Botanical Garden Tract," NBG Standing Files.
58 "Norfolk Botanical Garden Sculpture Inventory."
KAUFMAN HYDRANGEA GARDEN

The Kaufman Hydrangea Garden is located to the southeast of Friendship Pond. The area is comprised of 200 varieties of hydrangea. The area is shaded by mature pines, which provide the perfect nature mulch for this informal garden. There is a small, wood footbridge near Friendship Pond, which crosses a very shallow area of water. From the footbridge, visitors can access a gazebo. (fig. 90) The gazebo is one story and features a wood frame structural system. The gazebo is surmounted by an octagonal, asphalt-shingled roof and is supported by wood posts with wood bracket details. The roof also features an ornamental, octagonal lantern. The gazebo provides a secluded seating area away from main garden path. During their blooming period, the garden features mop-head type hydrangeas and rare Japanese breeds.(fig. 91)

The Kaufinan Hydrangea Garden was a gift from George and Linda Kaufman. Kaufman and his wife were well-known philanthropists in the Norfolk area. The Kaufmans headed the campaign to beautify the Old Dominion University campus. Their effort lead to the creation of the Kaufman Mall located on the 4800 block of Hampton Boulevard.⁶⁰


NATO VISTA AND TOWER

Surrounded by majestic redwoods and blue atlas cedars, this is the most vertically accessible area of the Garden. NATO Tower provides a bird's-eye view of the Norfolk Botanical Garden. The Flowering Arboretum, Matson Garden, Renaissance Court, and canals are all visible from the tower. (figs. 92-93)

In 1961, Vernon Moore, architect of the Administration Building and support buildings revealed his plans for the NATO Observation Tower.61 The excavated canals provided the soil needed to construct a 500-foot slope named NATO hill, in honor of the NATO Headquarters located in Norfolk. The hill also includes a reflecting pool. The tower exhibits the same roof style as the other Moore buildings at the Garden, thus

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61 "Gardens to Have Lounge: Will Dominate NATO Hill," NBG Standing Files.
creating architectural unity. The observation Tower is 33-feet high. It incorporates a concrete slab-foundation and a steel-support structural system. The observation platform encircles the central, steel support beam. (fig. 95) From below, the observation deck cantilevers over NATO hill. The central support structure allows for unobstructed views of the 1,000-foot NATO Vista. The NATO Vista is comprised of formally planted trees that form an *allee* from NATO Tower to Lake Wright. This is one of the most dramatic views in the Garden and is meant to resemble the vista at Versailles in France.\(^62\)

In 2001, the NATO Vista became the temporary home of six oversized presidential busts. The busts were the work of artist David Adickes and were ten-time human scale. The works were commissioned by an owner of a Days Inn hotel in Williamsburg, Virginia. Unfortunately, the projects were commissioned before the hotel owner had obtained proper ordinances to display the statues. While the artists and the commissioner were tied up in city ordinance issues, six of the 42 commissioned works were placed on view at the Norfolk Botanical Gardens. They were removed in 2002, in order to be placed with the remaining collection at the pending Presidential Park in Williamsburg, VA.\(^63\)

\(^{62}\) Ibid.

Figure 92. NATO Tower and Reflecting Pool. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.

Figure 93. NATO Tower and NATO Bridge. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.

Figure 94. NATO Tower. Norfolk Botanical Garden. Photo Courtesy of Norfolk Botanical Garden.
Figure 95. NATO Tower from below. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.
TROPICAL GARDEN

The Tropical Garden is located on NATO Hill. As one descends towards NATO Bridge, tropical plants such as palms, bananas, eucalyptus and elephant ears are planted closely along the path. (fig. 96) The tight planting of the garden simulates the feeling of being in a jungle.\(^{64}\) The path that descends from NATO Tower is unpaved. It features thick wood planked embedded into the ground that form an informal, and seemingly natural staircase. (fig. 97)

Figure 96. Tropical Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.

The Colonial Herb Garden is located to the west of NATO Bridge on the south side of the canal system. (fig. 98) This garden is manicured in a formal layout reminiscent of early seventeenth and eighteenth-century American gardens. The garden features medicinal plants and herbs such as lavender, thyme, and sage. The beds are defined by white picket fences and boxwood shrubs. (fig. 99) Centrally located in the garden is a one-story gazebo. The gazebo incorporates a concrete slab foundation and a wood frame structural system. Plain wood posts support an asphalt-shingled, hipped roof. The path of the garden is laid with brick pavers. At the entrance to the garden is a memorial plaque from the Daughters of the American Revolution.65 This garden began in 1961 with a donation from the Garden Club of Norfolk.66

Figure 98. Colonial Herb Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.

MATSON PERENNIAL GARDEN

The Matson Perennial Garden is the newest themed garden. It was designed by Norfolk Botanical Garden’s Senior Gardener, Linda Saunders. It is located next to Renaissance Court and the Border Garden. The garden honors the memory of Mr. Pat Matson, a local Hampton Roads citizen responsible for introducing many new perennials into the region. This quarter-of-an-acre garden features both new perennials, as well as many perennials clipped from the same plants that Pat Matson first introduced to Hampton Roads. The garden is also home to some of the original plants that he donated to Norfolk Botanical Garden. This new garden encompasses shade, sun, stream, a dry stack wall, and stone pathways. (fig. 100) Along the canal bank are large sweeps of perennials and along the paved road are smaller mixed groups of plants.  

Figure 100. Matson Perennial Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. March 2006. Photo by Author.

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ANNETTE KAGAN HEALING GARDEN

The Annette Kagan Healing Garden is located in the woodland section of the south portion of the garden, adjacent to the winter Garden. The garden features a stone-paved path complete with a stream, a small pond, and a stone footbridge. (figs. 101-102) The plantings highlight different species that can be used medicinally.\(^{68}\) The Annette Kagan Healing Garden is also home to one of the two sculptures of St. Francis owned by the Garden.\(^{69}\) (fig. 103) The area is secluded with an emphasis on the calm and soothing abilities that gardens can have on their visitors. (fig. 104)


\(^{68}\) Ibid.
\(^{69}\) “Norfolk Botanical Garden Sculpture Inventory.”


BORDER WALK

Border walk is located on the walking trail near the canal between Matson Garden and Sarah Lee Baker Perennial Garden. It features densely planted beds flanking the walking trail. (fig. 105) This area of the Garden is currently closed to the public because a pair of nesting Bald Eagles found their home in the mature pines adjacent to Border Walk in 2005.70

Figure 105. Border Walk. Norfolk Botanical Garden. Photo Courtesy of Norfolk Botanical Garden.

The Rhododendron Glade is located to the north of Renaissance Court. This garden displays more than 175 varieties of rhododendrons. Many of these plants were transplanted to this area of the Garden during the airport expansion in 1971. Rhododendrons are among the first plants grown at the garden. Their planting was advocated by Charles Gillette during his first site visit. This garden is informally planted. The area is shaded by mature pines, which provide the perfect natural mulch for the rhododendrons. (fig. 106) The garden reaches its blooming peak in May.


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72 Don Allgood, "Revamping of Gardens to be Vast," NBG Standing Files.
73 "Greater Floral Variety is Planned for Gardens at Municipal Airport," Thompson Records.
THE FUTURE SITE OF THE CHILDREN’S GARDEN – W.O.W.

In February 2005, Norfolk Botanical Garden broke ground on their newest garden project. The project is named W.O.W., or World of Wonders. (fig. 107) It is a three-acre garden dedicated to families and children located just below NATO Tower in the center of the garden. The developers of this garden followed the philosophy that children need their own space to learn and grow. The goal of this garden is, “To encourage children to explore the connections between plants, international cultures and the environment, using their natural curiosity and playful instincts.”


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In order to fulfill the imagination of all children the garden has designed multiple areas of interest within the site. A Global Gateway forms the entrance to the garden. This gateway will be framed by beds of annuals and feature various displays of color via flags to create the transition between the real world and the world of wonder. The World Plaza provides children the opportunity to move through underground tunnel into a world of water. This interactive area will include bubblers, foggers, and jet sprays. The play will be guided as a means to learn the oceans and other major waterways on Earth. The Discovery Peak area will feature interactive displays tracing the origins of plants to their home countries. Children will follow ‘the Trade Route” along a low wall for climbing and playing. The focal point of Imagination Circle is a one-of-a-kind water fountain, with a water spray controlled by the children. The fountains will be designed to teach the children lessons in teamwork, in order to make the fountain reach its highest point.

The Dirt Factory will feature an oversized tree house, where children will learn about bugs, plant seeds, and well, be allowed to play in the dirt. Plant Safari will feature an interactive sundial using one’s own body. A trail will lead visitors through an acre of wetlands, forests, and grassland and desert areas. (fig. 108) A 2,000 square foot Learning Lab will have classrooms with floor-to-ceiling windows and a unique amphitheatre suitable for family-oriented concerts and performances.
Lastly, WOW will include the *Passport Gardens.* (fig. 109) These consist of six different gardens highlighting the plants and animals found in different parts of the world. Each of the passport gardens will be large enough for small groups and feature areas for self-exploration. The planned passport gardens are: Werowocomoco Woods - Eastern U.S. Deciduous Forest, Oodnadatta Outback - Australian Outback, Amazonia - South American Rain Forest, Ithaca Isle - Mediterranean Chaparral, Serengeti Savanna - African Grassland, Kamchatka Taiga - Northern Coniferous Forest. The project is slated to be completed in the fall of 2006.\(^{75}\)

\(^{75}\) Ibid.
The Bicentennial Rose Garden is a 3.5-acre garden located next to Baker Hall. It was dedicated in 1976 in recognition of the United States’ Bicentennial.

The rose garden was designed in partnership with the Tidewater Rose Society, who furnished the first 800 roses in 1974. The garden was recently renovated by a local Landscape Architectural Firm Siska/Auraund, Inc. The garden is comprised of manicured rows of flowerbeds, intermingled with individually planted rose bushes. The garden features a wood arbor covered in roses and two, concrete water features designed in the Modern Style. The garden displays over 4,000 roses representing 250 different types as well as the All-American Rose Selections. An All-American Rose garden means that the garden has been selected to grow and displays the newest breeds of roses. These gardens act as “test gardens” and are required to

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76 “3,800 Rose Blooms in Norfolk Botanical Gardens,” NBG Standing Files.
anonymously care for all the new breeds until a winner is announced. (fig. 116) There are only 120 All-American Rose Gardens in the United States. 78

Centrally located in the garden is a handicapped-accessible terrace. This terrace provides bird’s-eye-view of the rose garden and adjacent canal. The terrace is actually a utility building which has had its roof converted for public use and planting. The terrace building features a concrete-slab foundation and a concrete block structural system clad in rusticated stone. The primary entrance is comprised of a single-leaf door on the east elevation. The building is cleverly hidden by rose bushes and its multiple functions.

Lastly, the Bicentennial Rose Garden features a stone-clad bridge crossing the manmade canal that runs adjacent to the garden. (fig. 117) This bridge was reconstructed in 2004 following Hurricane Isabel. The original bridge was constructed from a Quonset hut and clad in stone.

![Figure 110. Bicentennial Rose Garden_1. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.](http://www.nbgs.org/ourcollection/explore/index.shtml)

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FLOWERING ARBORETUM

The Flowering Arboretum was originally the idea of Bob Matthews. He needed a means to fill 27 acres of vacant space in the center of the garden.\textsuperscript{79} Today the Flowering Arboretum is a 17.5-acre garden located in the center of the Norfolk Botanical Garden. It features over 336 different varieties of flowering trees.\textsuperscript{80} (fig. 118) In 1982 a large section of crepe myrtle trees were added to the original Flowering Arboretum acreage. (fig. 119) In addition, the Flowering Arboretum is home to Mayor’s Row, which is a collection of pear trees planted in honor of every Mayor of the city of Norfolk.\textsuperscript{81} The majority of the area is planted informally. (fig. 120)

Figure 118. Bench, Flowering Arboretum. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.

\textsuperscript{79} Lackey, 21, NBG Standing Files.
\textsuperscript{81} Lackey, 21, NBG Standing Files.
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT GARDEN

The Virginia Native Plant Garden is located on the northern neck of Lake Wright. It is comprised of 6-acres of land and features four different plant communities. (fig. 121) Each of these different communities represents a historic habitat that once covered the
southeastern Virginia landscape. Communities include Bald-cypress - water tupelo swamp, Bottomland hardwood, Atlantic white cedar forest, and Longleaf pine stand. The Virginia Native Plant Garden, begun in the late 1990's, is still under development today. The garden is supported by funds from: Garden Club of Norfolk, Princess Anne Garden Club, The Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust, The Virginia Beach Garden Club, The Virginia Environmental Endowment, and the South Hampton Roads Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society.

Figure 121. Unpaved Walking Trial. Virginia Native Plant Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.

The Bald cypress- water tupelo swamp is commonly found along rivers in southeastern Virginia. (figs. 122-123) These swamps are often the wettest and deepest forested wetlands. Although they are usually separate from an actual river, the ground in these areas is commonly flooded and trees are normally standing in water that is a few feet deep. Trees commonly form “knees,” which reach above the water line and supply

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the roots with needed oxygen. Trees in bald cypress - water tupelo swamps can easily reach over 150 feet tall. It is common for these trees to form a wide base that acts as a buttress stabilizing the tree in the soft soil. The most common threat to the bald cypress tupelo swamp is human activity. Road construction, as well as ditch digging has altered the water levels in many of these native areas, thus removing the natural conditions needed for the community to survive.84

![Figure 122. Bald Cypress-Water Tupelo Swamp Sign, Virginia Native Plant Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.](image-url)

The bottomland hardwood forest community is usually found in areas that are near lakes and rivers. (figs. 124-125) These low-lying plants are capable of withstanding periods of both flood and drought. Typical trees associated with this community include: willow oak, river birch, sycamore, red maple, and sourwood and, swamp cyrilla. This ecosystem has been threatened by the need for lumber. Their preservation is of extreme importance as they form the buffer between land and water. Their presence prevents land erosion and filters water run-off before it reaches the Chesapeake Bay.\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.

Virginia is the northernmost region in which one can find communities of Longleaf pines. (figs. 126-128) Typically, longleaf pines flourish in areas where forest fires have cleared space. These large trees require excessive water and light and therefore do not succeed well when in competition with other trees. Due to their commercial uses in lumber and resin, longleaf pines are rare to find in Virginia. Young long-leaf pines are often at risk of destruction because they resemble tufts of grass in the early stages of development and are vulnerable to animals within the habitat. Longleaf pines also serve as the home to an endangered species of red-cockaded woodpecker. These birds burrow nests in pines that are over 65 years old. With the rapid decrease in mature pines, the population of these birds has drastically decreased.\textsuperscript{86}

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Longleaf_Pine_Stand_Sign.jpg}
\caption{Longleaf Pine Stand Sign. Virginia Native Plant Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
Figure 127. Longleaf Pine Stand, Virginia Native Plant Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.

Figure 128. Looking Up in Longleaf Pine Stand, Virginia Native Plant Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.
Atlantic white-cedar forests usually occupy relatively wet peatlands that are subject to infrequent catastrophic fires. Dense, even-aged communities are established when fires remove most vegetation and debris, thus exposing suitable minerals in the soil. Throughout their maturation, Atlantic white cedar forests accumulate extensive dead wood making them increasingly susceptible to destructive fires. Atlantic white cedars dominate the highest elevations of the area, sometime red maple, swamp tupelo, or pines are interspersed with other shrubs.\textsuperscript{87}

The garden features the R.W. Cross Nature Trail.\textsuperscript{88} The nature trail is unpaved in portions, consisting of natural plant materials such as pine needles to cover the path. Other portions of the trail consist of a wood-plank boardwalk. (fig. 129) The boardwalk curves around the edge of Lake Wright and allows views several locations to rest on wood benches. Along the path are detailed signs explaining each of the featured plant communities, their history, and why they are threaten. Special attention has been paid to existing plants present in the 6-acre lot. (fig. 130) Photographic documentation illustrates areas where the wood-plank boardwalk has been shaped to allow for continued growth of the trees lining its edges.

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
MEADOW AND FOUR SEASONS GARDEN

This garden began in 1994 as the Bunny Morgan Memorial Wildflower Meadow. Today it is known as the Four Seasons Garden. The garden was a donation from Perry E.
Morgan in honor of his wife Bunny. It is planted with more than 50 species of wildflowers and 10 species of grasses. (figure 131) The area provides a variety of views depending on the season one visits. The summer fills the garden with coreopsis and grasses; while the spring features poppy, centaurea, and gypsophila blooms. This garden is a perfect example of loose, informal plantings that can be successful in urban environments and require little maintenance.\textsuperscript{89}

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure131.jpg}
\caption{Meadow. Norfolk Botanical Garden. Photo Courtesy of Norfolk Botanical Garden.}
\end{figure}

The garden features a one-story gazebo placed along a stone paved path that leads to a bubbling fountain. (fig. 132) The gazebo incorporates a concrete slab foundation and wood frame structural system. The hexagonal shape allows benches to be nestled under the asphalt-shingled hexagonal roof. The fountain incorporates a concrete slab foundation and is clad in stone veneer. (fig. 133) The fountain is circular with various stones located in the center. A \textit{gerbe} spouts bubbles water over the natural stones in the center of the fountain. (fig. 134) To the south of the gazebo is a mature tree shading a seating area that features tree stumps as seats. (fig. 135) This seating area functions as

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
an outdoor classroom where one can learn about the various birds and insects that
meadow plants attract.

Photo by Author.

Figure 133. Fountain, Four Seasons Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006.
Photo by Author.
The Bristow Butterfly Garden is a 3-acre habitat for butterflies and moths. It was created in 1998, following a donation from Julia Bristow. Bristow is an avid butterfly
enthusiast and breeder. She also helped found the Butterfly Society of Virginia in 1992. The Society now has over 75 members.  

In order to plan a successful butterfly garden in is imperative to understand the life cycle of the butterfly. Butterflies enter the world as eggs placed on specific plants by their mothers. These eggs become caterpillars. Different varieties of caterpillars require different host plants from which to feed. The Bristow Garden features a variety of host plants in order to attract different caterpillars and thus different butterflies. For example, Black Swallowtails butterflies are attracted to dill, parsley, or carrots and Monarchs are attracted to milkweed. The garden also features a collection of nectar-producing flowers to entice transient butterflies.

The perpetuation of a butterfly’s cycle consists of female butterflies seeking out nectar and host plants; the males search for females to mate. Once eggs become caterpillars and finish their growing stage, they will form a chrysalis. This is the stage where the tissues of the caterpillar liquefy and rearrange into butterfly form. This stage may last a few weeks or as long as six months. During the chrysalis stage, gardeners pay close attention to any chrysalises to avoid any disruption to the metamorphosis.

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Other features specific to butterfly gardens present in Bristow Garden is its secluded, south-facing location near Lake Wright. This location allows for the most amount of possible sunlight. Butterflies are cold-blooded and therefore need sunlight for at least six hours a day. Butterflies also prefer quiet sites where they will not be disturbed while they are feeding. The proximity to water is also importance as butterflies can often be found drinking water from mud puddles, as a means to receive the mineral salts they require for life.\footnote{Ibid.}

The Bristow Butterfly Garden signifies a new approach to gardens at the Garden. It illustrates a commitment to environmental preservation and education. Signage present in the butterfly garden explains the role and function of butterfly gardens. (fig. 136) Also, by providing the habitat for different species of butterflies, the Garden is helping maintain the present and existence of butterflies locally.

![Figure 136. Sign, Bristow Butterfly Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.](image-url)
The Bristow Butterfly garden features several resources. At the entrance garden to the garden is a “Comfort Station.” (fig.137) The comfort station includes restroom facilities, vending machines, water fountains, and a shaded seating area. It is a one-story concrete block building. It features a concrete slab foundation and concrete block structural system clad in stone veneer. There is a two-bay porch on the east elevation of the building. The porch is incorporated under the building’s main roof. The porch features wood posts and it is partially enclosed by extensive climbing plants on the east. The roof is side gable and clad in asphalt shingles.\(^{94}\)

Other resources include a one-story, gazebo near Lake Wright. The gazebo features a concrete slab foundation and a wood frame structural system. (fig. 138) The gazebo features an asphalt-shingled, hipped roof supported by wood posts with brackets and exposed rafters. (fig. 139) The gazebo is flanked by wood-frame arbors. The arbors shelter wood benches and feature partial, plain, wood balustrades. The foundation of the gazebo extends and steps down to the lake’s edge. There is also a metal bench located in the butterfly garden’s main bed. This bench is shaped like a butterfly and painted blue.\(^{95}\) (fig. 140)

\(^{94}\) Cheryl White, “Reconnaissance Survey: Site Visit to Norfolk Botanical Garden,” January 2006, In author’s possession.

\(^{95}\) Ibid.
Figure 137. Comfort Station, Bristow Butterfly Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.


Figure 139. Gazebo Detail, Bristow Butterfly Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.
ENCHANTED FOREST

The Enchanted Forest is located in the northernmost section of the garden. It features mature trees shading a walking trail. (fig. 141) At the entrance to the Enchanted Forest, visitors are given the choice of a paved trail or unpaved trail. (fig. 142) This allows visitors the sense of being in deep wilderness. This area of the garden emphasizes the vertical ability of nature. During summer months, the Enchanted Forest is so shaded that it provides a cool, dark sanctuary for visitors on foot.96

96 Cheryl White, “Reconnaissance Survey: Site Visit to Norfolk Botanical Garden,” January 2006, In author’s possession

Figure 142. Option of Walking Trails, Enchanted Forest. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.
CHILDREN’S VEGETABLE GARDEN AND GREENHOUSE

The Children’s Vegetable Garden and Greenhouse are located on the northern arm of the walking trail near the Maintenance Compound and Flowering Arboretum. (fig. 143) The greenhouse incorporates a concrete slab foundation and metal-frame structural system. It is partially clad in plastic sheathing and plexi-glass panels, which allow for an adequate flow of light and air. Appended to the north elevation of the greenhouse is a one-story concrete block building surmounted by an asphalt-shingled hipped roof.  

Adjacent to the greenhouse is the Children’s Vegetable Garden. The garden’s perimeter is defined by a white-picket fence. (fig. 144) The garden features individual plant beds, which can be tended by citizens who rent the plot. These plots allow children, who may live in urban areas, the opportunity to learn about gardening and the responsibilities that it entails. Parts of this garden are tended by H.E.L.P. (The Horticulture Enrichment Learning Program) students. H.E.L.P. is an educational horticultural therapy program aimed at assisting older children in attaining their GED while learning the therapeutic advantages of gardening. The program targets the following types of participants:

- Youth 6 - 18 years old who would benefit from our unique variety of services
- Youth who are two or more years behind in school, or have recently exhibited poor academic performance
- Youth who have been involved with the court system for runaway, truancy, traffic misdemeanor, and low-level offenses.
- Youth who exhibit family related needs or are currently in a foster care or group home environment.

- Youth who suffer from the effects of physical, emotional and or sexual abuse.
- Youth who are dealing with health and medical issues.

H.E.L.P. is an intensive day-program that lasts ten weeks. The program is partially funded by the City of Norfolk with funds received from the Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act (VJCCA). In addition, donations from local donors and foundations make the program possible.

The vegetable garden features a storage shed, a gazebo, and three sculptures. The storage shed is comprised of a wood-frame structural system clad in wood panels. It features a single-leaf door, 1/1 double-hung, vinyl windows, and a front gable roof clad in asphalt shingles. The gazebo is comprised of a wood-frame structural system surmounted by an asphalt-shingled roof. There is a lantern at the roof apex of the gazebo. Located to the south of the garden is a one-story, concrete block utility building surmounted by an asphalt-shingled hipped roof. The utility building is sheltered amongst trees and is virtually invisible from the main walking trail. There are three sculptures, known as The Farmers, which depict over-sized metal figures tending to the garden. The sculptures are by artist Peruko Copacatty and are on loan to the garden from the collection of Stanley Peck. There is an arbor and small storage building located to the north of the greenhouse and vegetable garden.

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99 Ibid.
100 Cheryl White, “Reconnaissance Survey: Site Visit to Norfolk Botanical Garden,” January 2006, In author’s possession.
101 “Norfolk Botanical Garden Sculpture Inventory.”
Figure 143. Children’s Vegetable Garden and Greenhouse. Norfolk Botanical Garden. Photo Courtesy of Norfolk Botanical Garden.


BAKER OVERLOOK

Baker Overlook is located in the western section of the Garden overlooking the canals near a stone bridge. (fig. 153) The garden features a manmade hill surmounted by a two-tiered overlook. (fig. 154) The overlook has two entrances from the walking trail. The first entrance is handicapped accessible with a concrete paved base and metal handrails. The second entrance features a winding stair constructed with flagstones. The stairs access a wood plank overlook with seating and an amazing view of the garden canals and NATO Tower. (fig. 155) The overlook also features a one-story gazebo. The gazebo incorporates a concrete slab foundation and wood frame structural system. The asphalt-shingled, cross-gable roof is supported by chamfered, wood posts. The entire overlook is shaded by mature pines.¹⁰³ Plantings cover the raised hill and highlight a variety of textures and colors.¹⁰⁴ Plants have been incorporated onto the lookout via large ceramic pots.


Figure 155. Right, View from Top of Baker Overlook. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.
FIGURE 8 GARDEN

In May 1962, the Marion Crosby Garden Club dedicated the Marion Crosby Ferndale at the Garden in honor of Mrs. Albert V. Crosby, a prominent figure in local garden clubs. It was the first garden at complex to commemorate a person. In addition to the garden a 6-foot tall, bronze sculpture of St. Francis of Assisi was presented for display. (fig. 156) The sculpture, by local artist Miss Eleanor W. Mellon was valued at $6,000. in 1962. Today the Ferndale is known as the Figure 8 Garden. (fig. 157) It is located to the north of Renaissance Court adjacent to the Bank Fountain. The garden features a small figure 8-shaped stream.  

Figure 156. Eleanor W. Mellon. St. Francis. Bronze. 1962. Figure 8 Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. March 2006. Photo by Author.

105 "Marion Crosby Ferndale and Statue Dedication Set at Botanical Garden," NBG Standing Files.
ALL-AMERICAN SELECTIONS DISPLAY GARDEN

The All-American Selections Display garden is located near the northeast base of NATO Tower. The garden features a stone path lined by various beds and trees. There is a stunning example of tree braiding found in this garden.107 (fig. 158) The plants featured at this garden are All-American Selections (AAS) winners. AAS is a program that tests new annual varieties throughout North America. This garden is the Norfolk is home to one of the test gardens, which nurture the plants from seed through maturation.108

FERN GLADE

The Fern Glade is located adjacent to the All-American Selections Display Garden and the Future Children’s Garden. It features a winding path shaded by mature trees. The garden features a variety of ferns and a multi-functional sculpture. The sculpture depicts a young girl holding two bowls in her hands. (fig. 159) The bowls fill with water and therefore the sculpture functions as a birdfeeder.109

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Figure 159. Fern Glade Sculpture. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.
WINTER GARDEN

The Winter Garden is located on the south side of the canal adjacent to the Annette Kagan Healing Garden. The garden highlights plants that flourish and bloom in the winter months of the year. The planting of the garden is along a shady, mulch-lined path sheltered by mature pines. (fig. 160) The garden features variegated evergreens and the unusual *Stachyurus*, a winter blooming flowers with long, spiky yellow flowers.\(^\text{110}\)

Figure 160. Winter Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. March 2006. Photo by Author.

CONIFER GARDEN

The conifer garden is situated along the canal near Baker Overlook. It features different varieties of coniferous trees. Visitors can descend wood plank stairs embedded in the canal bed to secluded seating near the water. (fig. 161) The garden is informally planned and highlights the range of colors and textures possible in a conifer garden. (fig. 162) This area includes both vulnerable and dwarf specimens of conifer varieties.111

Figure 161. Stairs, Conifer Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. March 2006. Photo by Author.

Figure 162. Conifer Garden. Norfolk Botanical Garden. March 2006. Photo by Author.
SHADY WOOD

The Shady wood is located north of Baker Overlook adjacent to the Maintenance Compound. The area is planted informally and features mature pines. (fig. 163) It features picnic tables, secluded seating areas, and a cast concrete podium. (fig. 164) The podium is inscribed, “MASSARELLI’S.”\(^{112}\) Massarelli is the name of a New Jersey-based, family-owned company specializing in fine lawn ornaments.\(^{113}\)

Figure 163. Seating Area, Shady Wood. Norfolk Botanical Garden. March 2006. Photo by Author.

\(^{112}\) Cheryl White, “Reconnaissance Survey: Site Visit to Norfolk Botanical Garden,” March 2006, In author’s possession.

Figure 164. Podium, Shady Wood. Norfolk Botanical Garden. March 2006. Photo by Author.
BOAT BASIN AND CANALS

The Boat Basin is located behind the Tea House and Japanese Garden. (figs. 165-166) The canals form a wishbone design originating from the Boat Basin. One canal travels northwest towards Bakers Overlook and Lake Wright. The other canal branches to the southeast past the Bicentennial Rose Garden to Lake Wright. The path of the canals allow for a 45-minute tour of the Garden and Lake Wright.114 (figs. 167-172)

The Boat Basin and canals were the vision of Fred Huette. Huette designed the canals after a trip to the Florida Cypress Garden, which featured tour boats electrically guided on rails. The project began in 1961 and continued throughout the mid-1960s.115 In 1967, a retaining wall was added to the Boat Basin so that the water level of the canals would not be affected by drought conditions.116 The entrances to the boats features Japanese influenced gateways similar to the entrance to the Japanese Garden. There is a one-story Ticket Booth located near the Boat Basin.117 (fig. 173) Also, a bronze sculpture, Hunter's Herons by David and William Turner is located along the canal near the Bicentennial Rose Garden.118 (fig. 174)

115 “Canal Digging Starts at New Garden Site,” NBG Standing Files.
118 “Norfolk Botanical Garden Sculpture Inventory.”


Figure 168. Canal from NATO Bridge. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.

Figure 169. Canal and NATO Bridge. Norfolk Botanical Garden. January 2006. Photo by Author.

Figure 172. Aerial view of Canal. Norfolk Botanical Garden. Photo Courtesy of Norfolk Botanical Garden.


NORFOLK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT OVERLOOK

The Airport Overlook is located on the land burm separating the Norfolk Botanical Garden from the Norfolk International Airport. (fig. 175) The land burm was constructed during the 1966-68 expansion of the airport as a means to protect the Garden from noise and jet blasts. The Overlook features an unobstructed view of the airplane
runway. (fig. 176) Visitors can read the posted signage that explains wind speed and direction. In addition, there is a radio, which allows visitors to listen to air ground control at the airport. The Overlook is accessed via a winding, manicured path flanked by flowerbeds. The juxtaposition of garden to airport is most visible at this location.\footnote{Butler, NBG Standing Files.}

Figure 175. View from Norfolk International Airport Overlook to Terminal. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.

Figure 176. View from Norfolk International Airport Overlook to Runway. Norfolk Botanical Garden. September 2005. Photo by Author.
SECTION III

NORFOLK BOTANICAL GARDEN AND ITS FUNCTION IN URBAN PLANNING

Gardening is civil and social, but it wants
the vigor and freedom of the forest and the outlaw.
~Henry David Thoreau

Why is a garden significant? Why do trees and plants, and habitats matter in urban society? What is the importance of location, history, and function within a garden? These are the questions that I asked myself when beginning this thesis. And while many of the questions seemed easy to answer with references to aesthetics, further investigation illuminated much more than a pretty place. The Garden has extended its influence from a green space to an active participant in the community via educational, historical, and environmental programs. Its significance begins with its location and extends into art collection, and environmentalism.

The Garden was recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its nomination was based on three factors: its history as a WPA project employing African-American women, its continued maintenance of the historic acres in the naturalistic style advocated by the National Parks Service at the time of its creation, and the involvement of Fred Huette.¹ Today, the Garden has extended its influence to community and educational programs. Not only is the Garden a significant example of local history, it provides an active arena to discuss racism, history, landscape design, and the purpose of gardens in urban areas.

BRIEF HISTORY OF URBAN PLANNING IN AMERICA

In order to understand fully the significance of gardens in urban areas, one must understand various schools of urban planning. Urban planning in America was a reactionary event. During the mid-1800's, the deplorable living conditions within the nation's cities prompted the creation of the City Beautiful Movement, a component of the Progressive Reform Movement. This movement took hold during the 1890s and 1900s. Its most visible practitioner was Frederick Olmsted, landscape architect of New York's Central Park. The basic principle of the City Beautiful Movement was that beautification could create social order and harmony. In order to decrease the reality and perception that cities were places of poverty and moral decay, planners advocated the construction of monumental buildings and public parks. Stylistically the movement drew from both Ancient and Renaissance motifs. While these styles differed, they both advocated order, balance, and harmony. Many Progressive Reform practitioners began with projects to improve sanitation, or provide missions, like Jane Adams' Hull House. City Beautiful leaders believed that the reform should begin by creating a beautiful city. With the proper surroundings, inhabitants would then be inspired to moral and civic virtue.

The City Beautiful Movement was most visible during the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. The fair was held in Chicago and architect, Daniel H. Burnham planned the exhibition space along City Beautiful principles. The Exposition space was comprised of buildings designed by various American architects, as well as plazas, parks, fountains, sculptures, and murals. The space gave the artists and architects the

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3 W.H. Wilson, 79.
opportunity to create a new urban space. The product was a gleaming white city inspired by European tradition, but with an American flare including modern, industrial products and technologies.

The actual exposition spaces included showcases on aesthetic concerns in the city such as transportation, sanitation, and security. The Exposition was seen by thousands. As a direct result, members of New York’s Municipal Arts Society planned a City-Beautiful-inspired design for their city. The 1898 charter for the newly joined five boroughs of New York included provisions to review all art and architecture within the city. This provided the city the means to develop and control the quality of public spaces. Other City Beautiful-inspired plans include Daniel Burnham’s, Macmillan Plan for Washington, D.C. and Burnham’s plan for Chicago designed with follow architect, Edward Bennett.

While concerned with the aesthetic beauty of the cities, Olmsted, a major City Beautiful practioner, mostly advocated for the role of public parks. According to Olmsted, “In any city closely covering a large area, well-distributed public playgrounds and neighborhood parks become one of the urgent needs if the health and vigor of the people are to be maintained.”

Elements of the City Beautiful Movement are abundant at the Norfolk Botanical Garden. First and foremost is the Garden itself. The Garden is an oasis in the city. It takes visitors out of urban congestion and into a peaceful atmosphere. Specific areas

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5 Upton, 225.  
6 M.H. Bogart, Public Sculpture and the Civic Ideal in New York City (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989), 58.  
7 Upton, 199-200.  
within the Garden, Renaissance Court and the Statuary Vista, further the natural aesthetic beauty via sculpture and fountains. These spaces are reminiscent of the Renaissance period and further the Garden’s function as a public art space. The inclusion of art for public viewing illustrates the Garden’s commitment to the City Beautiful ideals. By allowing for exhibitions, citizens are given the opportunity to return to the arts and the community. Thus, the disassociation that can occur in large urban areas is itself displaced and harmony restored.

Another significant urban planning movement, the Garden City, was founded by Ebenezer Howard in 1898. The Garden City Movement placed emphasis on urban designs that included issues of public health. The Garden City Movement advocated towns surrounded by greenbelts, with differing functions balanced in different areas of the plan. The cities would be self-sufficient, with separate areas designated for industry, agriculture, and residences. The Garden City Movement was utopian in nature, and while some communities designed by these principles still exist, modern life had altered the original vision set forth by Howard.

The Garden City Movement included green space surrounding the city and advocated home gardens for residents. The inclusion of green space is what is missing in many of today’s urban cities. Unfortunately, issues of land consumption make the inclusion of a greenbelt surrounding a city virtually impossible. One could argue that the separateness of function advocated by Garden City practitioners has evolved, or rather devolved, into the modern epidemic of urban sprawl. What Howard saw as small, planned communities have mutated into Americans suburbs. Only American suburbs

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have neglected to include greenbelts, or walk able street blocks. Moreover, suburbs have paved the way for an excessive society, based on individual communities and single-occupancy vehicles for transportation. In order to control sprawl and over development, new urban designs are being developed. These designs advocate mixed-use development, transit-oriented development, affordable housing, and an emphasis on green space over gray space.

MODERN URBAN PLANNING CONCEPTS

The 1960s saw a trend in urban planning known as Urban Renewal. This trend advocated new building in urban areas. While it is not difficult to comprehend the concept of starting over with a clean slate, the Urban Renewal trend resulted in the destruction of the historic fabric of many American cities. In 1961, Jane Jacobs published, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. This was the first backlash against Urban Renewal. Jacobs advocated the return to small city blocks and renovation over demolition. Jacobs book set the precedent for what is now known as New Urbanism.10 New Urbanist planners believe in the power and ability of traditional neighborhoods to restore functional, sustainable communities.

Recent concepts in urban planning include Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and Smart Growth. Both of these concepts want to return urban planning to city designs rather than new suburban construction. They advocate preservation over destruction. In addition, special emphasis is focused on alternatives means of transportation, mixed-use developments, and the inclusion of public parks. TOD’s advocate a complete reduction

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of space for individual parking. These designs are meant to encourage public-transportation with narrow streets, and pedestrian friendly walkways and city planning.\textsuperscript{11} Smart Growth planning shares many of the same elements as TOD’s, however the main emphasis is placed on future development. Smart Growth advocates transparent, fair, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly rules for development. By understanding the impact of development, planners could become proactive in controlling sprawl and land consumption.\textsuperscript{12}

So, what do these modern urban planning movements have to do with the Norfolk Botanical Garden? It is the example that the Garden could serve as to both trends. The Garden was developed in conjunction with the Norfolk International Airport, thus placing it as a forerunner to the TOD designs of today. The location of the Garden, planned in the 1930s, is illustrative of these new urban design principles. First, the mixed-use nature of the area where the Garden is located is unprecedented. It serves as a buffer between the airport and residential development. Secondly, the Garden functions as a gateway into the city of Norfolk. The harmonious relationship proves that separation of functions may not be as utopian as Howard once believed.

As for the Garden’s relationship to Smart Growth principles, the evidence was clear before Norfolk planted its first azalea. The city knew that the Garden would be a tourist attraction, but the proximity to the Garden also gave them a means to control future development. This is not to say that the city saw the Garden as expendable, but as


an easier neighbor than 100 individual citizens. During the airport expansion in 1966-68, the Garden and the city came to a land exchange agreement, resulting in the transplantation of over 6,000 plants and funds for redevelopment. These redevelopment funds provided the Garden the means to elevate their role in the city, expand their programming, and increase city revenue. As early as 1936, plans to develop the airport were in place. By locating the gardens next to the airport, Norfolk was prepared to tackle future development in the most efficient means necessary.

In urban planning, more must be considered than design and future development. Cities need more than good parks and schools. Cities need a sense of community as a means to retain citizens. Retained citizens tend to maintain their residence, support local businesses, and foster a sense of pride in their community. Norfolk has a built-in cycle of residents due to its role as a major naval base. This makes the already difficult task of retaining citizens that much harder. Norfolk residents are all too often governed by federal relocation orders rather than dislike of the area. The garden is an example of how Norfolk tries to lead the community in projects that will endure and involve the community.

Perhaps the only urban planning concern at the Garden is the transportation to bring people to the Garden. Yes, airplanes bring people in from all over the country, but there is no bus line servicing the Garden. This limits local access to the Garden. The problem rests with local taxicab businesses, which want control over traffic to the airport, and thus no adequate bus line has ever been fully developed. The Garden has begun a drive for the consideration of improved public transportation to the airport and the
future development. This is not to say that the city saw the Garden as expendable, but as an easier neighbor than 100 individual citizens. During the airport expansion in 1966-68, the Garden and the city came to a land exchange agreement, resulting in the transplantation of over 6,000 plants and funds for redevelopment. These redevelopment funds provided the Garden the means to elevate their role in the city, expand their programming, and increase city revenue. As early as 1936, plans to develop the airport were in place. By locating the gardens next to the airport, Norfolk was prepared to tackle future development in the most efficient means necessary.

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Garden. This drive will allow visitors without means of personal transportation the opportunity to experience the community programs offered at the Garden.

RACE AND THE GARDEN

One cannot discuss the significance of the Garden without addressing the issue of race. The garden was planted by 200 African American Women and 20 African American men. The project was initially seen as an effective means to employ unskilled laborers during the Depression. The WPA workers were exposed to all weather conditions, poison ivy, and snakes. At the time that City Manager Tommy Thompson developed this program, there was already a female-only, WPA-funded sewing room in the city. Both African-American and Caucasian women worked in the sewing room. When the city received funding to begin the azalea garden project, the African-American women were moved from the sewing room to the Garden. Caucasian women replaced those who were moved. Early accounts of this can be found in the pages of the News Journal and Guide, Norfolk's only African-American publication at the time.

The early history of the Garden provides the community with a physical example of racism. Over years, the Garden's history has been targeted as overtly racist. In order to address these issues, the Garden developed a Diversity Committee dedicated to bring the Garden's roots in the African-American community to light. The committee is currently in the process of commissioning a sculpture to honor the original garden workers. However, is this enough? Do the ends justify the means? Is the hard labor of

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13 Cheryl White, Personal Notes, Diversity Committee Meeting, 21 July 2004, Norfolk Botanical Garden. In author's possession.
14 Thomas P. Thompson to Joe Bobbit, 26 August 1938; Thompson Records.
these women an act of racism or simply the result of a nation undergoing a Depression? These are some of the questions that will be asked when the sculpture is commissioned at their 70th Anniversary in 2008.15

The students at Ruffner Academy’s Community Action Group took it upon themselves to record an oral history of the descendants of the WPA workers.16 This project brought to light the various opinions surrounding the Garden’s origins. The project also allowed the Garden to meet the last-known survivor of the original garden workers, Mrs. Edna Joyce. Mrs. Joyce was 16 when the project began. She remembered the cold days filled with hard work, but she also remembered the pay. To her, the Garden was a job to help support her family.17 Sadly, Mrs. Joyce passed away in January 2006.

Sally Austin Tucker, another garden worker, had a son, Matthew Austin. Mr. Austin attended the first meeting of the Diversity Committee. During the meeting, he gave the Committee members a vivid, first-hand account of the hardships present during the Depression. He told the members of the Committee that while the garden had its problems, young African-Americans needed to know its history. “They need to feel the pride I feel when I come through those garden gates.”18

Perhaps the biggest irony of the Garden history is that while the work was harsh, there is no one honoring the Caucasian women who worked in the sewing room project. No one saved sewing machines or clothes made by the women in the sewing room. There is no museum commemorating their history, no legacy that they too worked during the Depression. However, the efforts of the original garden workers are still here and

15 Cheryl White, Personal Notes, Diversity Committee Meeting, 19 November 2003. In author’s possession.
16 Digging Into Repressed Times: Oral History of Norfolk Botanical Garden, DVD.
17 Stoughton, 6.
18 Cheryl White, Personal Notes, Diversity Committee Meeting, 19 November 2003. In author’s possession.
alive. Their sweat and hours of labor have literally grown into one of the most-respected gardens in the United States. Their legacy, unlike those Caucasian women who replaced them, is preserved and honored in the continued life of the Garden.

It is with full acknowledgement that the Garden pursues the goal to share their history with the community. They have taken measures to ensure racial diversity on their Board of Directors, as well as, to develop an historic tour of the garden highlighting the role of the original WPA workers. While nothing can undo the past, education, acknowledgement, and acceptance will keep the memory of these women from slipping away. Through memorialization and awareness, the Garden is actively embracing their history and a future including the women who made it all possible.

EDUCATION AND THE GARDEN

Another way in which the Garden expresses their commitment to the community is through their continued educational program. The Garden itself is an educational and scientific sanctuary filled with hundreds of plant species, insects, and animals. Last year, the Garden became the home to a pair of American bald eagles. Nevertheless, more has to be done to maintain habitats outside of the Garden. By using the Garden as an example of landscape preservation and environmental awareness visitors can understand the need for more open spaces in urban areas.

On this note, the Garden has developed educational programs and signs in conjunction with their Garden that help the public gain awareness of environmental issues. The Virginia Native Plant garden is a prime example of how the Garden has incorporated environmental education in its gardens. The Native Plant Garden recreates
four habits indigenous to the Tidewater area. The garden features educational signage explaining the components of each garden, their function, and threats to their survival. By understanding the fragile ecosystem present in Virginia, both children and adults can make better choices to protect and save our fading habitats.

The Garden also offers extensive education courses. These range from summer day-programs for children to advanced classes for Master Gardeners.\(^{19}\) The horticultural therapy program (H.E.L.P.) provides adolescents the opportunity to receive their G.E.D. while learning about the healing effects of nature. The program also teaches responsibility and community provide.\(^{20}\)

Since the received historic status in December 2005, it now has another educational role. Preservation of historic landscapes has become more prevalent in today’s society. Over-development often leads to destruction of old building, but land is also at risk. By educating visitors on the significance of land preservation and expressing various garden styles, the Garden will serve as example of how land can be used and maintained, without losing the integrity of nature.

CONCLUSION

What began as a means to provide jobs and a tourist income into the city of Norfolk has now become much more than imagined. The Garden is the gateway to the city, the first and last view visitors have of Norfolk. It is the home to an art collection of over 37 permanent works, and a cycle of temporary exhibitions. It features 158 acres of


land filled with 20 themed gardens, manmade canals, and a complete educational facility. It is the home to a pair of nesting bald eagles. It is a location for youth to explore and learn life-long lessons in responsibility. The Garden is a shining example of how well planned urban design can create something beautiful and historic.

Henry David Thoreau wrote, “Gardening is civil and social, but it wants the vigor and freedom of the forest and the outlaw.” At the Norfolk Botanical Garden, all of the above are provided. The Garden is civil, involved in the community and honors NATO. It provides socially to the area via educational program, the International Azalea Festival, and numerous spring weddings. There is an enchanted forest and there may even be an outlaw or two in its horticultural therapy program. In short, the Norfolk Botanical Garden is everything a garden could possibly want to be.
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APPENDIX A
MAP OF NORFOLK BOTANICAL GARDEN
Figure 177. Map of Norfolk Botanical Garden. 2004. Courtesy of Norfolk Botanical Garden.
APPENDIX B

UNCATALOGUED AND UNTITLED HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS
OF NORFOLK BOTANICAL GARDEN SHOWING
THE EVOLUTION OF THE WALKING TRAIL, 1938-1954


Cheryl White is a Hampton Roads native. She received her B.A. in Art History from Old Dominion University in 2003. As an undergraduate she interned with a local Architectural Historian and assisted in the documentation of over 6,000 properties in Virginia. While completing her Masters in Humanities, Cheryl served as Gallery Assistant to the Old Dominion University Gallery. During her assistantship, she catalogued the University's collection of Faye Zetlin paintings. Cheryl completed the nomination for the Norfolk Botanical Garden in 2005, and it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in December 2005. She currently serves on the Diversity Committee at the Norfolk Botanical Garden, and volunteers as their Historian.