

Agency Official 106 Effect Report

*Reinstall Diana Statue at Chatham
Stafford County, Virginia*

**U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park
120 Chatham Lane
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22405**

Purpose

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park was authorized by an act of Congress on February 14, 1927 (44 Stat. 1091). The purpose of the park, as stated in the act, is “to commemorate the Civil War battles of Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania Court House, Wilderness, and Chancellorsville, including Salem Church ... to survey, locate, and preserve the lines of the opposing armies in said battles, to open, construct, and repair such roads, highways, paths, and other approaches as may be necessary to make the historical points accessible to the public and to students of said battles ... and together also with such additional land as the Secretary of War may deem necessary for monuments, markers, tablets, roads, highways, paths, approaches, and to carry out the general purposes of this Act.” By Executive Order 6166 in 1933 the park was transferred to the Department of the Interior to be administered by the National Park Service.

In 1975, FRSP took possession of Chatham and opened the site to the public the following year. Since then, Chatham has remained open as a visitor contact site and has also operated as the park administrative headquarters.

Need

In the most recent update to the National Register documentation for Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania NMP (FRSP), the Chatham Designed Landscape and Chatham Walled Garden are recognized as sites contributing to the park’s eligibility. The garden statues, such as Ceres, Flora and Pan are listed as historic associated features.

The formal Chatham Walled Garden was established in the early 1920s by owners Daniel and Helen Devore. The statuary was added between 1921 and 1927, based upon recommendations by the garden’s primary architect Ellen Biddle Shipman. Frances Benjamin Johnston’s 1927 photos of Chatham provide solid documentation for many of the statues. While many pieces of the original statuary survive on the grounds of Chatham, others have disappeared. In the mid-1970s, the John Lee Pratt Estate auctioned off many pieces of the garden furniture, ornaments and statues. One large and prominent statue was removed from the grounds decades earlier, when the Pratts donated the statue “A Companion of Diana” to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) in Richmond, Va.

The origin of the Diana Statue is uncertain, but it was installed with the other garden statuary during the 1920s, under the Devores’ ownership. Unlike most of the other pieces, which were made of limestone, the Diana figure is made of terracotta and was originally painted white. The date of the statue is also uncertain, but is believed to be a copy of Rene Fremin’s (1672-1744) “A Companion of Diana” by M. Fernandez French. It is possible that the statue was created in the 18th century, as the date 1717 appears on the base of the statue. The Diana statue originally stood upon a stone plinth at the eastern entrance to the garden wall. In 1959, John Lee Pratt donated the Diana statue to the VMFA. Following the removal of Diana, a limestone Ceres statue was

relocated from elsewhere on the property and installed upon the empty plinth. The original location of Ceres is unknown, however it is speculated that it occupied the now-empty stone plinth at the northwestern end of the upper terrace on the west side of the main house. No historic photos of this plinth have been located to indicate what statue was originally located there, however the Ceres statue's original location at this plinth makes sense, as it would complement the Flora statue located across the upper terrace on an identical plinth at the southwestern end of the main house.

In mid-2017, the VMFA decided to deaccession the Diana statue and offered it to the NPS at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania NMP. The park discussed the possibility of returning the statue to its original location at the entrance to the Chatham garden. An inspection of the statue revealed that it was not in a condition for outdoor display, as numerous cracks and damage was visible, as well as the protective paint had long since been removed. Working with the park staff, the Friends of Chatham engaged the services of a fine object conservationist who has begun the following work:

- Stabilize all structural damage, such as to the shin and quiver
- Reduce remnant white paint
- Repair fissures, cracks, and voids that would allow water to enter the figure and invite more damage through degradation of the terra cotta body and stress of freeze/thaw cycles
- Remove and replace, or rework, as appropriate, clumsy repairs such as to the proper left forefinger
- Investigate questionable areas and treat as necessary, such as the over-paint of the proper right forearm and hand, and the unknown materials below that paint
- Restore sculptural losses such as to toes
- Provide fills to incidental surface damage, such as caused by previous paint removal, minor chipping and gouging, etc.
- Coat with primer and paint chosen specifically for outdoor exhibition of ceramic objects

The conservation of the Diana statue, outlined above, is currently underway. When the conservation is completed, the park proposes to reinstall the Diana statue at its original Chatham location, on the plinth at the east entrance to the walled garden. This will also involve moving the Ceres statue to the vacant plinth in the northwest corner of the upper terrace on the west side of the main house.

Property Description

A. Major Physical Components – Chatham sits on 85.01 acres in Stafford County, Va. The tract is a mixture of open fields and wood lots, bisected by a few ravines that feed rainwater runoff to the Rappahannock River. East of the house is a maintained walled garden. Most of the open fields are under cultivation. The house itself is open to the public seven days a week.

B. Historical Significance – The house was constructed by William Fitzhugh, a prominent plantation owner in 18th century Virginia. Among his guests at Chatham were George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. During the Civil War, the Union army occupied Chatham beginning in the spring of 1862. President Abraham Lincoln visited his generals at Chatham during that period. In December 1862, Union generals again made Chatham headquarters and both during and after the Battle of Fredericksburg the house and grounds became a hospital for wounded soldiers. Both Clara Barton and the poet Walt Whitman cared for the wounded at Chatham. In the post-Civil War years, the house went through a number of owners, many of whom made changes and additions to the buildings and property. The 1920s walled garden represents the work of Ellen Biddle Shipman, an early twentieth-century New York landscape architect.

C. Archaeological Significance – Numerous archaeological investigations have occurred on the grounds of Chatham. Most have focused on testing for the installation of interpretive signs. In 1977, archaeological investigations occurred around the foundation of the main house in preparation of NPS work to provide adequate drainage for the building's foundation. In 1979, an overall archaeological survey of the Chatham property was undertaken. Chatham is a significant archaeological site.

D. Historic Landscape Significance – The draft National Register documentation states:

“The Chatham Designed Landscape and the Chatham Walled Garden are significant under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture as examples of the early twentieth-century work of landscape architect Ellen Biddle Shipman.”

A Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) was recently completed for Chatham. It recognizes the Walled Garden Statuary, the Ceres Statue, and the empty Plinth as small-scale features and contributing to the landscape's significance. The CLR's treatment recommendations make no mention of the statues or the plinth and do not recommend any specific treatment for them.

E. Architectural Significance - The main structures at Chatham were constructed between 1768 and 1771 and served as a domestic site for over 200 years. The statuary in the Walled Garden and elsewhere on the property have not been assessed from an architectural perspective, but are considered small-scale features contributing to the landscape's significance. The statues are not on the park's List of Classified Structures.

Description of Alternatives

Alternative A – No Action

Under this alternative, the Diana statue would return from the conservator but would not return to its original location on the plinth outside the east entrance to Chatham's walled garden. The Ceres statue would remain at its current location and the Diana statue would be put into storage.

The misplaced statues would continue to represent a landscape different than that which was designed in the 1920s.

Alternative B – Curate Diana Statue

Under this alternative, the Diana statue would return from the conservator but would not return to its original location on the plinth outside the east entrance to Chatham’s walled garden. The Ceres statue would remain at its current location and the Diana statue would be added to the park’s museum collection. The statue would be accessioned and curated or put on display in a museum setting. The park, however, does not have any curatorial storage space large enough for the statue nor any accommodating display space within any of its buildings. The misplaced statues would continue to represent a landscape different than that which was designed in the 1920s.

Alternative C – Reinstall Diana Statue (Preferred)

Under this alternative, the Diana statue would return from the conservator and would be reinstalled at its original location on the plinth outside the east entrance to Chatham’s walled garden. The Ceres statue would be moved to the now vacant plinth in the northwest corner of the upper terrace on the west side of the main house. The park has engaged a NPS architectural conservator, as well as a fine arts handler, to develop a plan for moving the statues and for resetting and securing them on the plinths. This alternative would return an original statue to the walled garden at Chatham and reflect both Shipman’s and the Devores’ original intent for the designed landscape.

Description of Mitigation Measures

The park has engaged both a NPS Architectural Conservator and a fine arts handler to develop a safe and appropriate plan for moving the statues and for resetting and securing them on the plinths.

Effect Analysis

It is park’s opinion that the preferred alternative will have “no adverse effect” on the historic properties of Chatham.

Park Consultation

The proposal is being circulated to the park’s Section-106 advisor for historic architecture and landscape architecture.

The proposal is going through a 30-day public comment and review period. During this time, the project is being placed on the NPS public website. The park has contacted representatives of interested local organizations, such as the University of Mary Washington’s Department of

Historic Preservation, Stafford County, the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table, the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, the Friends of Chatham, and the Pamunkey Indian Tribe.

The project will go through a 30-day comment and review period with the Virginia SHPO.

Attached Supporting Documentation

- A. Park Map
- B. Photos

Conclusion

At important historic sites, the proposed undertaking would foster fulfillment of the park's General Management Plan directives to protect cultural resources. This project will have "no adverse effect" upon historic resources.

Report Prepared By

Eric J. Mink
Section-106 Coordinator/Cultural Resources Management Specialist
(540) 693-3200