

To: Ware-Lyndon House Garden User Group

From: Ware-Lyndon House Committee

Date: June 24, 2014

Re: Proposed garden design/location

The Ware-Lyndon House Committee met to review the available drawing and information for the Ware-Lyndon garden. We have unanimously endorsed the following comments for your consideration:

We are disappointed in the apparent new direction for the front lawn formal garden at the Ware-Lyndon house and the process set in place that has changed the entire concept for the proposed garden.

Approximately five years ago our house committee worked diligently for six months with a nationally renowned landscape architect to produce a formal garden concept for the front of the Ware-Lyndon house that was inspired by the Stevens Thomas garden. This garden concept was well received by the public and the SPLOST committee which ranked our project second most popular out of the sixty-seven projects presented for the current SPLOST package. Our house committee realized that there might be changes in the various components and in the proportions of our conceptual plan, but we never entertained the idea that this would include a change in location and a loss of axial symmetry between the front of the historic house and the street. We believe that this symmetry and balance are *de riguer* to the gardens of the mid-1800s in the South.

We are also extremely disappointed in the process that only included a few meetings between September 2013 and spring 2014 but that now seems to be very rushed between the kick-off meeting with Root Design Studio on May 28th and a completely new design accepted two weeks later on June 11th with no apparent method for public review or comment.

Some specific points for your consideration:

- Please slow down the design process to allow public input and comments that will lead to the best possible product.
- Our house committee strongly endorsed the concept of a balanced front lawn formal garden inspired by the historic Stevens Thomas garden. However, the recreation of this garden has become controversial, and we now ask the Root Design Studio to start afresh.
- We prefer a garden inspired by private classical gardens of the Georgia Piedmont. But this garden must serve the dual purpose of a public garden for small social function and a new more welcoming and more accessible entrance to the front of the historic house.

- We believe moving the garden to the side lawn is contrary to the SPLOST ballot language which stated “a historically inspired front lawn formal garden.”
- If it is necessary to remove the 1970s-era oak tree to complete the task, we would endorse this action along with the planting of a new evergreen screen on both sides of the rock wall and the addition of new trees in the informal areas framing the garden.
- The cistern for irrigation should remain on the less visible eastern side of the house. This is important for the interpretation of the garden as a green project.
- If moving the garden back to the center axis of the front porch necessitates removal of sections of the inappropriate brick walkway, please consider replacing the walkway with more appropriate historic bricks in a herringbone pattern that is documented as original to the front lawn.
- We definitely want a truly historically-inspired Georgia Piedmont formal garden, but the size and complexity should be influenced by the budget and by site limitations.

Sincerely yours,

Ron Evans, chair

Janet Clark

Jim Carter

Tom Wilfong