

MEMO

To: Ware-Lyndon House – Historic Garden User Group

From: Ware-Lyndon House Committee

Date: June 23, 2014

Re.: Proposed garden design/location

The house committee of the Ware-Lyndon House has studied the current choice of Concept C, the one panel installation, non-symmetrical design based on the historic nineteenth-century Stevens Thomas garden formerly on Pulaski Street in downtown Athens. The house committee is unanimously opposed to this concept and considers it completely inappropriate for the Ware-Lyndon House and for the site for the following reasons:

- The garden needs to be balanced and symmetrical with respect to the house itself and to Hoyt Street. The concept of axial symmetry was important both for architecture and for landscape architecture in the Greek Revival period. The idea was that you would walk through a perfectly balanced garden through the front door into a perfectly balanced house. Equal “rooms” on each side of the front walkway, and then equal rooms on either side of a central hall.
- There should be a connection between the house and the garden. Gardens were seen as an extension of the house. One could step off the porch into the various outdoor rooms of the garden. One could enjoy the views of the garden from the porch and from the front windows of the house.
- The concept of a display garden without connection to the house or street is not appropriate for the period in which the Ware-Lyndon House was built.
- The original SPLOST initiative was sold in part as a way of enhancing the visitor experience to the Ware-Lyndon House. The garden would add to the arrival experience. The sequence of outdoor rooms would add to the importance of arriving at the front door.

Our recommendation is to dismiss Concept C and start over. We need a garden that would have been appropriate for a nineteenth-century mansion on the edge of Athens. The garden should be balanced in relationship to the house and to the street. Since the Stevens Thomas garden has caused so many problems with our attempts to recreate it at the Ware-Lyndon House, discard it as a model and simply incorporate elements of that garden as our taste and budget allow. While we might not be able to achieve our ultimate vision within the constraints of our SPLOST budget, we want whatever we do at the Ware-Lyndon House to add to the visitor experience, not detract from it.

Thank you for your consideration.