

# Management Summary





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September of 2006, the National Park Service entered into a contract with Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP as Task Order Number 1 of an Indefinite Quantity Contract for Architectural and Engineering Services (IDIQ). Task Order Number 1 was to provide a Historic Structure Report (HSR) for the Carter G Woodson Home National Historic Site at 1538 Ninth Street, NW, Washington, DC. The project team for the scope of work consisted of the following consultants:

- Historian - **Judith H. Robinson & Associates, Inc.**
- Structural Engineer - **Robert Silman & Associates, PLLC**
- Mechanical/Electrical/Plumbing/Fire Safety Engineer - **GHT Limited**
- Materials Conservation - **Jablonski Berkowitz Conservation, Inc.**
- Cost Estimating - **US Cost**

The Carter G. Woodson Home was built between the years of 1872 and 1879. It was designed in the Victorian Italianate Style and contributes to a row of houses on Ninth Street that form a relatively intact representation of residential development in Washington DC in the late 1800's. Many of the stylistic elements of the Italianate Style for both the exterior and interior of the house still exist today and are fair condition.

The house changed ownership many times over the last 135 years and served as a single family residence, a tenant house and as offices. The owner and occupant of most significance was Dr. Carter G. Woodson who purchased the house in 1922 and lived there until 1950. Dr. Woodson was a Harvard educated historian and DC Public Schools teacher who founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (now known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History or ASALH). While living in 1538 Ninth Street, Dr. Woodson directed the Association and a publishing company from his home. He is credited for establishing Negro History Week (now Black History Month) in 1926. After Dr. Woodson passed away in 1950, the Association took ownership of the house and occupied it until 1971 when they moved to another facility. The Association leased the facility out to the publishers of American Visions Magazine. The house was vacant for several years allowing it to fall into disrepair. The National Park Services purchased the house from the Association on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2005 with the intent of turning it into a Museum to celebrate the life of Dr. Woodson.

The development of the home can be divided into five distinct periods:

- Period 1 (1872-1879) – The period of the original construction when used as a single family residence.
- Period 2 (1880-1921) – The period when the two story addition was added onto the house. During this time the house was used as both a single family and multi-tenant dwelling.
- Period 3 (1922-1950) – During this period Dr. Carter G. Woodson purchased the home and lived there while also using it for offices for the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History.

- Period 4 (1951-1971) – The period during which the Association continued to use the building as their headquarters.
- Period 5 (1972-Present) – Period after which the Association moved out.

This Historic Structure Report establishes Period 3 (1922-1950) as the Period of Significance due to Dr. Woodson both living in the house and operating the ASALH out of the house. It is his association with the house during this period which merited listing it in the National Register of Historic Places and a designation as a National Historic Landmark.

As a result of the house being vacant for the last 10 years, the consultant team determined that there are a significant number of urgent repairs and necessary preservation that have been recommended. Many of the elements that have been put in place to arrest further damage, such as the concrete block installed in the window and door openings, will have to be reversed. Significant repairs will be required for the structure surrounding the main stair. Portions of the masonry load bearing walls at the rear of the structure will have to be entirely rebuilt. The building will require all new mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire safety and security systems.

The National Park Service had established, prior to the consultant team beginning their work, that the Carter G. Woodson Home would be used as a House Museum and this Historic Structure Report was to be a guide for treatment and work recommendations to restore, preserve, and interpret the property as Dr. Carter G. Woodson's residence, library and office. In the Spring of 2006, representatives from the National Park Services-National Capital Region met to review two treatment options and four use options for the property as presented in the 90% Draft Document that the consultant team submitted on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The Park determined that the ultimate treatment for the property would include all items outlined in the **Treatment 1 and Treatment 1a** descriptions included in the report. These treatments would reverse all elements added to the exterior and interior of the building after Period 3 and restore the house to its appearance during Dr. Woodson's occupancy while preserving all elements from Period 1 and 2 that are contributing features to the Victorian Italianate style. Although Treatment Option 1a was selected, further research and discussions with the National Park Service will be required because the elements of Option 1a are linked to the interpretive concept for how the House Museum will be established, which is not part of this report.

Similarly, the representatives from the National Park Service recommend that the ultimate use for the property be **Use Option 3 – Interpretative House Museum/Full Visitor Access/Shared Use of Three Adjacent Properties**. The intent of this option is to provide an interpretative house museum experience with exhibits on how Dr. Woodson used the spaces in the house and exhibits relating to his life. This option would integrate the adjacent three properties into the design of the museum. Building services, visitor orientation, an accessible entry, and NPS administrative space would be accommodated for in these reconfigured adjacent structures. Access points would be provided to every floor of the Woodson Home from the

adjacent structures so that visitors would be able to experience every floor of the home while still having a code compliant means of egress and accessible access. The goal of this option is to provide a high level of accessibility and efficient circulation without compromising the historic character of the Carter G. Woodson Home.

The project team determined that the preliminary (Class "C") cost estimate to accomplish the selected Treatment and use for the Carter G. Woodson Home would be \$3,775,753.00. This cost includes all work recommendations made for the repair of the building as well as recommendations contained in Treatment Option 1, Treatment Option 1A and Use Option 3.

### ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

**Property Name:** Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site

**Property Location:** 1538 Ninth Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009

**Property Owner:** National Park Service, purchased in June 2005

**NPS Requisitioning Office:** National Park Service-National Capital Parks-East  
1900 Anacostia Drive, SE  
Washington, DC 20020

**NPS Task Order Name:** Historic Structures Report for Carter G. Woodson Home NHS

**NPS Task Order Abbreviation:** CAWO

**NPS Contract Number:** C3000060016

**NPS Task Order Number:** Task Order Number 1

**NPS PMIS Reference Number:** 125623

**NPS Requisition Reference Number:** R3545060020

**National Register Information:** Designated a National Historic Landmark and listed in the National Register of Historic Places on May 11, 1976.

**National Register Reference Number:** 76002135

**District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites:** Listed on 3 March, 1979.

**Historic American Building Survey:** Photographs taken in 1883.

**Period of Significance:** 1915-1950

**Washington DC Historic District:** Shaw Historic District

**General Management Plan:** No

**Current Use:** Vacant

**Project Statement and Purpose:** The townhouse at 1538 Ninth Street, North West, Washington DC is a site of national significance due to its association with the owner/occupant, Dr. Carter G. Woodson. Dr. Woodson, who occupied the home from 1922 until his death in 1950 is recognized as the father of Black History for his efforts in establishing the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (later to be know as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History) and for publishing some of the first documents that promoted African American History. The Carter G. Woodson Home was designated as a National Historic Landmark on May 11, 1976. The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History used the home as their headquarters until 1978 when they moved to a new location. The building was sold to the National Park Service in June of 2005.

The National Park Service has requested the Beyer Blinder Belle and the assembled consultant team prepare a Historic Structure Report (HSR) that will serve as a “road map” for the restoration of the home. This HSR will include the following:

- Development history of the property
- Identification of components of the house that are contributing to its historic significance.
- Physical description of features including age, significance and condition.
- An assessment of architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection systems for the building.
- A conservation analysis of mortar and paint identifying paint layers and mortar makeup.
- Recommendations for treatment of the architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection systems identified under the assessment task.
- Alternatives for the treatment and use of the historic structure.
- A recommended “ultimate treatment” for the historic structure.
- Documentation of the existing conditions of the building with drawings and photographs.

**Cultural Resource Data:**

The period of significance has been identified as 1922 to 1950, the period of time during which Dr. Carter G. Woodson occupied the house. Although he founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915, established The Journal of Negro History in 1916, and established the Associated Publishers Inc. in 1920, he did not purchase the home until 1922, thus marking that year as the beginning of the period of significance. When living in the home, Dr. Woodson founded Negro History Week in 1926. Celebrated during the second week of February between the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, Negro History Week continues to be observed today, having become Black History Month.

The home is significant also for its contribution to the line of similar 1880's Victorian Italianate style town homes that flank it. The structures together form a strong streetscape of authentic historic homes that provide an impression of what a typical mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Washington DC middle-class housing neighborhood was like.

The Carter G. Woodson Home is situated in The Shaw historic district known as the “heart of Black Washington” which served as the larger context for the period of significance for the home. There are over 70 sites within the Shaw that contribute to African American heritage of Washington, including the Woodson Home. Four of Washington's Historic Districts fall within or adjacent to the Shaw; LeDroit Park, Logan Circle, Sixteenth Street and Blagden Alley/Naylor Court. Within close proximity to the Woodson home are several sites that are directly linked to Woodson's life. The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House, located a short distance away on Vermont Avenue, was the home of one of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History's presidents. As was mentioned earlier, Dr. Carter G. Woodson

founded this organization and therefore knew Ms. Bethune well. To the north of Rhode Island, a brief walk from the Woodson home, is the Phyllis Wheatley YMCA where Carter Woodson ate most of his meals.

#### Related Studies:

The following studies were provided by the National Park Service to the consultant team as initial documentation to begin the Historic Structure Report:

- The Afro-American Institute for Historic Preservation and Community Development and the Institute for Urban Development Research, School of Business and Public Management, The George Washington University, Carter G. Woodson – National Historic Site and Management District Study, May, 1991.
- United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Special Resource Study – Carter G. Woodson Home, June, 2002.

For further listings of written information on this property, refer to the bibliography at the end of the report.

#### Project Team - NPS:

Contracting Officer - Tom McConnell  
 Contracting Officer's Representative - Steve Doulis  
 Regional Chief Architect – Susan Long  
 Site Manager – Robert T. Parker  
 Regional Historian – Gary Scott  
 Park Historian – Frank Faragasso

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