

General Management Plan
Newsletter #2
April 2009

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Carter G. Woodson Home NHS
National Capital Parks-East



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Dear Friends and Neighbors of Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site,

We are pleased to share this second newsletter with you and ask for your continued assistance in our planning effort to develop a Draft General Management Plan for the national historic site. This plan will guide management and development of the Woodson Home and determine how the national historic site will address resource management, visitor use, and operations issues during the next 20 years or so.

We would like to thank all of you who provided feedback on the first newsletter, which presented the first draft of the national historic site's purpose and significance statements and interpretive themes. The ideas, issues, and concerns that you shared have been informative and helpful as we continue with the next phase of planning.

During the past few months we have developed a range of conceptual alternative management strategies for the site. These alternative concepts, which are anchored by the national historic site's legislation and the above-mentioned purpose and significance statements, explore a range of options for resolving management issues. The "no action" alternative describes the continuation of the current management course. In this alternative, the house would continue to be preserved for future generations, but not open to the public.

The no action alternative, which is required by law, serves as a baseline for comparing the value of the other alternatives. Three action alternative concepts have also been developed.

We emphasize that these preliminary alternatives are "works in progress" that require your input. Your comments and suggestions will help us refine a preferred alternative that will be published in a Draft General Management Plan, which will be made available for your review and comment at a later date.

We value your input regarding the future of Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site. Any comments you have may be sent to Superintendent, National Capital Parks-East, 1900 Anacostia Parkway, SE, Washington, D.C. 20020-6722, or you can comment via the web at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/CAWO>.

Thank you for your time and effort.

Gayle Hazelwood
Superintendent,
National Capital Parks-East

WHAT HAVE WE HEARD?

We appreciate the comments and thoughts we received from you in response to our first newsletter, which was distributed in September. In that newsletter, we asked for your input on the national historic site's draft purpose and significance statements and proposed draft interpretive themes.

No comments were received that dealt specifically with the site's purpose statement or the five significance statements. The planning team will move forward with the following as guidance.

The planning team also asked readers to give us ideas for the development of Carter G. Woodson National Historic Site. We were not disappointed. Much of the public comment received, focused on interpretation. The planning team had identified five interpretive themes in the first newsletter. All interpretive suggestions fit neatly within the themes and subthemes identified in that newsletter.

When asked to envision the site for the long term, the public was enthusiastic in its suggestions. Some suggestions were specific, while others were much more general in nature. Respondents suggested:

- Restoration of the house to the way it looked during Dr. Woodson's life—restored and fill with period furnishings,
- Develop the house as an educational facility with a library with lectures and programs for visitors,
- Make one or more of the structures a museum showcasing Dr. Woodson's achievements,
- Make the house a "living, breathing" site for the continuation of Dr. Woodson's work,
- Provide relevant connections to historically black colleges and universities for researchers, and
- Make the national historic site open, available, and a credit to the community and the nation.

When asked about the top priorities for the house, restoration and maintenance were mentioned most. It was important that the house reflect well upon, and be an asset to, the Shaw neighborhood.

Purpose

The Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site was set aside by Congress "to preserve, protect, and interpret for the benefit, education, and inspiration of present and future generations the home [and legacy] of the preeminent historian and educator Dr. Carter G. Woodson, founder of the organization known today as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History."

Significance

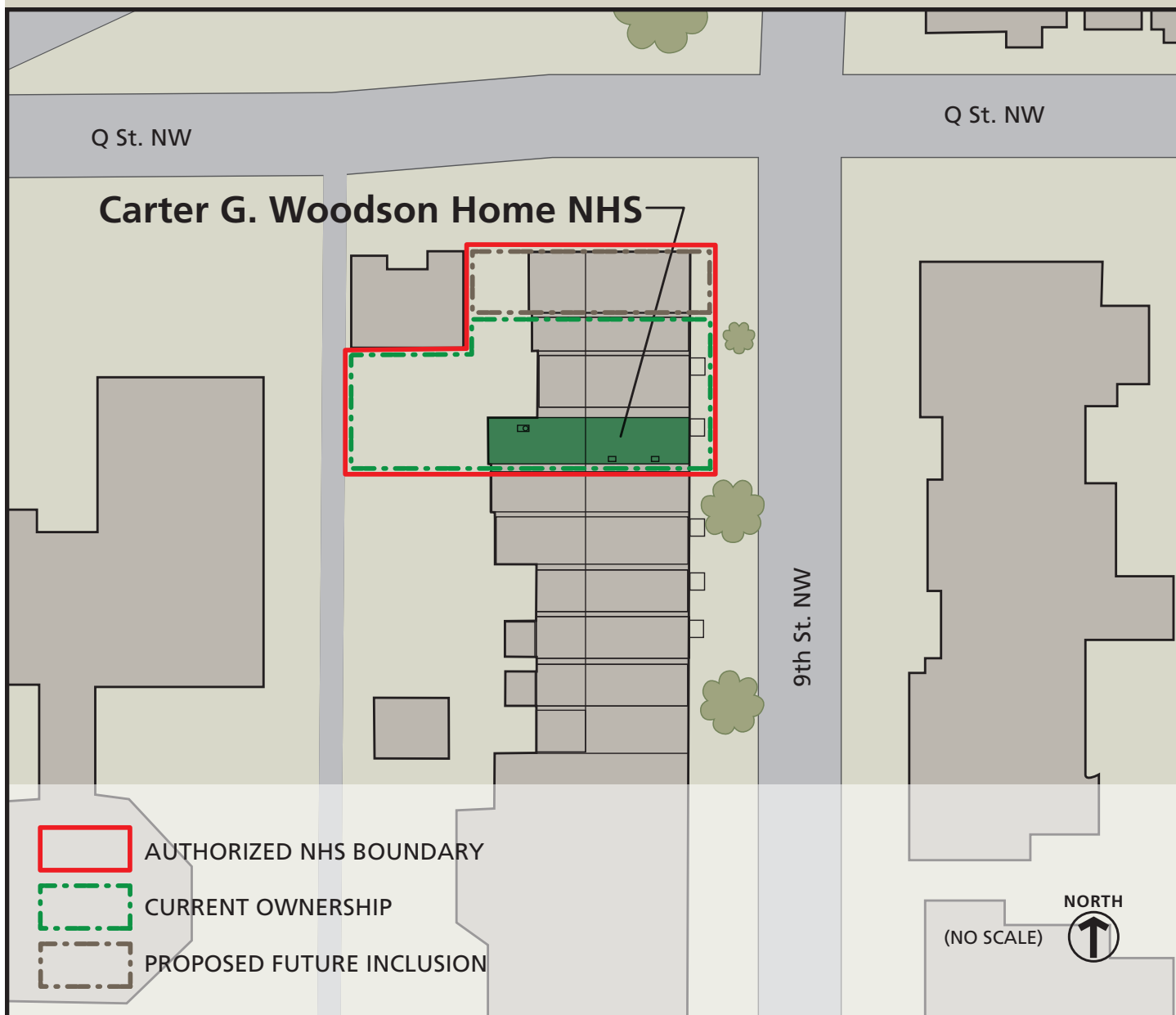
- The Dr. Carter G. Woodson home was his residence from its purchase in 1922 until his death in 1950; it served as the base for his pioneering work in African American history and publishing.
- In 1915 Dr. Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, now the Association for the Study of African American Life and History and, in 1921, he established Associated Publishers.
- Because he was a leader, Dr. Woodson's home was an important community focus for the interaction of African Americans of diverse trades, professions, and economic backgrounds; Dr. Woodson both learned from and taught these many people, spreading appreciation for African American history through this nation and beyond.
- Dr. Woodson founded Negro History Week (now Black History Month), which continues to have broad impact across America and the world.
- Dr. Woodson initiated programs of scholarly research and education that were designed to reach both the academic community and a general audience.

Others thought that it should be up and functioning quickly, becoming a major tourist attraction and a showcase for Woodson's contributions.

Responders to the question "what, in your opinion, are the most important issues affecting the national historic site now and in the future?" suggested: funding, structure restoration, integration of the site and programs into the neighborhood, visitor safety, and recognition of the importance of describing the African American experience for future generations.

Many useful suggestions regarding how the national historic site might build relationships with the surrounding neighborhood were also received. These included:

- Appointing staff to work with community organizations,
- Engaging local neighbors as custodians, guides, and as a neighborhood watch,
- Organizing neighborhood activities around the Carter G. Woodson story,
- Including the neighbors in the process of preserving the house, and
- Tying programs in with the local schools.





THE PLANNING PROCESS — WHERE ARE WE NOW?

We have completed the first two steps in the planning process — identifying why the site is important, what its assets are, what issues and opportunities we have, what we want to tell our visitors, and what the public thinks.

The next step in the process is to develop feasible preliminary alternative concepts while taking into consideration all of the things described above. Preliminary alternative concepts are simply short descriptions of an idea that will later be turned into a more fully detailed alternative. Based on the first newsletter, the planning team has identified a “no action” alternative and three possible preliminary alternative concepts.

In the no action alternative, the Woodson Home and adjacent buildings would be maintained under current management to ensure their preservation and to await a future decision on the preservation and interpretation of the site. The façade of the Woodson home would be restored to its appearance during Dr. Woodson’s lifetime. The other associated structures would be repaired and cleaned up but not restored. The front walk and street trees would be cared for. The backyards would be enclosed in an attractive, secure fence. Parking for one or two National Park Service (NPS) vehicles and possibly a tour bus would be provided off the alley. No permanent NPS staff would be on site, and the structures would not be open to visitors. All interpretation would occur through brochures, scheduled interpretive neighborhood walks, and wayside exhibits.

Alternative 1 proposes restoration of all structure façades to the Woodson period (1922–1950). The interior of the Woodson home would be rehabilitated but not restored. It would remain unfurnished, with only informational signs and period photographs to provide context. Adjacent structures would be used for administrative, visitor contact, and interpretation.

A visitor contact area in one of the ancillary structures would provide exhibits, sales, and staging for tour groups. Only ranger-led tours of the home would occur. Backyards would allow additional administrative space and possibly parking. Walking tours of the neighborhood, highlighting the places Dr. Woodson frequented, would be an integral interpretive feature.

Alternative 2 would also restore all structure façades to the Woodson period (1922–1950). The Woodson interior would be restored and refurnished similar to Frederick Douglass NHS, with emphasis on the various activities that occurred in the house such as publishing, warehousing, and private rooms. Adjacent structures would be used for lectures, administrative, visitor contact, interpretive, and storage space. Only ranger-led tours of the restored/refurnished home would occur. Backyards would be used for additional lecture/event/staging space. Walking tours of the neighborhood, highlighting the places Dr. Woodson frequented, would be an integral interpretive feature.

Alternative 3 would focus on continuing the legacy of Dr. Woodson and carrying on his scholarly work. The house would not be restored. Rather, it would be adaptively rehabilitated to provide a place for students and scholars to do research using Internet links to original data housed elsewhere. Several rooms could be furnished with usable period reproduction furnishings to provide inspiration during talks and lectures. Ranger-led tours of the house would be supplemented by appropriate informational signs that would help visitors to relate to Dr. Woodson’s world. All building exteriors would be restored to the historic period (1922–1950), and the backyards would be used to increase lecture/event/staging space. Adjacent structures would be used for lectures, administrative, visitor contact, interpretive, and storage space. The Woodson home would become a destination for guided tours and research, and a focus of lectures/seminars in an atmosphere reminiscent of the Woodson era.



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Did we miss the boat on the preliminary alternative concepts? Is there a suggestion you might have to improve one or more of these concepts? Let us know by May 15th.

Once we have received your comments, we will develop the concepts into fully realized alternatives. These will then be analyzed and described, and an NPS preferred alternative will be selected. The result of this effort will be published in a *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Assessment*, which will be made available for your evaluation and comment. We expect to reach this planning milestone during winter or spring 2010. We will also schedule a series of public meetings during that time to offer an alternative forum for your comments.



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SCHEDULE

STEP	TIMEFRAME	PLANNING ACTIVITY	HOW TO BE INVOLVED
1	Summer 2008	Project Initiation: the planning team assembles; defines the project scope; customizes the planning process; affirms the purpose; develops significance statements and interpretive themes	
2	Summer/Fall 2008	Planning team collects and analyzes relevant data and incorporates public comments received on newsletter #1	1. Read newsletter #1 2. Send us your comments
3 We are here	Spring 2009	Planning team develops and evaluates preliminary alternatives using park staff and public input; the team explores what the park's future should look like and proposes a range of reasonable alternatives	1. Read newsletter #2 2. Send us your comments
4	Summer 2009	Planning team revises preliminary alternatives, continues data collection, develops draft general management plan	
5	Fall 2009	Internal National Park Service/Department of the Interior review of the draft plan	
6	Winter 2010	A <i>Draft General Management Plan</i> and accompanying environmental document is published. The plan describes the alternatives and impacts. Based on the impacts and public input, a preferred alternative is identified in the document	1. Review the plan 2. Send us your comments 3. Attend public meetings
7	Spring 2010	Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) signed by Regional Director following public review and determination that no substantive comments have been received and changes may be reflected in an errata sheet	
8	Spring/Summer 2010	Begin funding request process	

Thank you for your interest in Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site!