

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RESIDENT CURATORSHIP: WARRINGTON HOUSE

Trap Pond State Park

Introduction

The Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation is seeking proposals from individuals or couples interested in entering into a resident curatorship agreement for the rehabilitation of Warrington House, located on the north side of County Road 66, near its intersection with County Road 62, on the southern boundary of Trap Pond State Park, as a residence. The Warrington House is a frame, two-story, Italianate style dwelling with a rear wing or ell. Built after about 1842, it features decorative Italianate brackets and other details that distinguish it from the much plainer residences more common in this part of the state. A resident curatorship is a public-private partnership in which private individuals or couples donate their time and money to rehabilitate or restore historic buildings on State property in exchange for long term rent-free use as a residence for their lifetime. The State of Maryland has operated a similar program for more than 20 years, preserving as many as 40 buildings (for information on Maryland's program, see their website at www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/curatorship.html).

The successful applicant for this resident curatorship will have the opportunity to live, rent-free, in this mid-19th century gem of a house in a rural setting buffered from encroaching development by publicly owned land that will never be developed for housing. The curator will also have the joy of creating his/her dream home without expending most of his/her resources simply to acquire the property. Finally, the curator will have the satisfaction of contributing to the preservation of Delaware's history.

How to Apply

Anyone interested in participating in this innovative program should submit a proposal to the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation. This proposal must include the following elements:

1. A detailed task by task breakdown of the proposed preservation, restoration, rehabilitation and renovation including the retention of the significant elements including, but not restricted to those defined in this request for proposals.
2. A detailed restoration work plan and cost estimate for completing the preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and renovation of the

curatorship structure within a five (5) year period. The work plan must show a task by task schedule for completing the work. The work plan must indicate which elements will be undertaken by the applicant(s) and which will be undertaken by a contractor. The work plan must also provide for the completion of an historic structure report recording evidence of the building's original appearance and the effects of later alterations before work begins.

3. A resume(s) outlining the experience of the curator(s) and/or their contractor(s) in completing one or more successful historic preservation rehabilitation or restoration projects, or other related experience.
4. A financial disclosure statement demonstrating the financial ability of the applicant(s) to complete the five-year work plan.
5. A copy of the applicant's federal and state income tax returns for the previous three years.
6. A completed background investigation form from each applicant authorizing the Division to conduct a background investigation on the applicant(s).

Background

Trap Pond State Park is a 2350 acre park located in southern Sussex County. The rural setting of this park, with its 163 acre pond, makes it ideal for a variety of outdoor activities, including camping, boating, hiking, and picnicking. Located within a forty-five minute drive of Delaware's beach resorts, Trap Pond State Park offers both convenience and serene surroundings to anyone who occupies the Warrington House.

The land on which the Warrington House is situated was once part of a larger tract of land owned by the Cannon family in the mid-eighteenth century. Joseph Cannon died in 1803; he divided the property among his five sons. Joseph Cannon (II) received the parcel where the Warrington House is located. When he died in 1825, he split his property between his two children, Jeremiah and Precilla; Jeremiah received the portion of the property where the Warrington House is located. Jeremiah died six years later. During his ownership of the property he added a bark mill and tanner's yard, which complimented the existing saw mill that was on the property. The large amounts of bark created by the saw mill were ground at the bark mill and soaked to remove tannic acids used to soften leather. Upon his death, Jeremiah divided the property into several parcels; his daughter, Hetty Ann, received the portion where the Warrington House is now located.

Hetty Ann married Elijah H. Warrington in 1842, and it was probably around this time that they moved what is now the kitchen of Warrington House to the site, adding the main block sometime after that. A Warrington family burial plot was also added to the property, and is located several hundred feet west of the house. Elijah split the property among his five living sons; one son, Joseph King Warrington, eventually acquired most, if not all, of his brothers' shares of the property. Eventually he passed the property on to his son Ford M. Warrington, the owner of the property when the State purchased it in 2000.

Warrington House itself is a two-and-a-half story, five-bay, Italianate style frame building with a rear ell. It is now covered with asbestos siding that has been painted a barn red, but the original clapboards are visible where the asbestos shingles have been damaged. Italianate decorative elements include brackets at the cornice line and lintels over the windows, even on the two small attic-story windows in the gable ends. A one story porch is featured on the front or south façade. The rear ell originally had a two-story porch on its east façade, which was later enclosed to form an entryway on the first floor and bedroom on the second floor. A one-story shed-roofed addition was added to the north or rear façade of the rear ell. There are also a number of outbuildings on the property, some of which should be considered part of the curatorship responsibility, while others may be demolished in consultation with the Division. A dwelling, large frame barn, and several other frame outbuildings and sheds comprise the farm. Fallow fields lay to the north, east, and west of the buildings; a forested area marks the perimeter of these fields. The property is accessed by a U-shaped drive, with the dwelling and yard situated in the middle section of the U, and the agricultural buildings scattered along the outer perimeter of the drive.

A centrally placed door in the south, or main, façade provides access to the first floor of the main block. Originally a center-hall plan, the first floor now features two large rooms separated by French doors. The open stair was moved from the center hall to the north wall of the west room and provides the main access to the second floor. Scars in the flooring of the second floor hall indicate the original placement of the staircase. The west room features an enclosed fireplace with a decorative surround in its west wall. A larger enclosed fireplace with a decorative surround is featured in the east wall of the east room; a stovepipe protrudes from the stack. The north wall of this room contains two openings – a doorway opening into the rear ell, and another doorway opening onto the enclosed porch. A bookshelf in this wall appears to be an enclosed window. The original ceiling is covered by a later drop ceiling.

The rear ell consists primarily of a large kitchen. Its north wall contains a large cooking fireplace with a decorative mantel. The fireplace has been enclosed and now has a stovepipe protruding from the wall above it. The adjoining wall is paneled. A small closet under the staircase, perhaps a woodbox, is located to the left of the fireplace; to the left of this is a winder stair leading to the second floor. This north wall retains remarkable woodwork and

detail. A doorway to the right of the fireplace leads to the shed addition, while a doorway in the east wall opens onto the enclosed porch. The trim of the windows in this room as well as the fireplace mantel and paneling suggest that this room may have been an earlier free-standing house. The main block may have been added to an existing house on the property, or an earlier house may have been moved here from another location to serve as the rear wing.

The second floor of the main block consists of a central hall flanked on either side by a large bedroom. A doorway in the north wall of the hall opens into the rear ell, which is situated two steps down from the main block and features two small rooms. The enclosed porch section of the rear ell features a bedroom and bathroom, and the original six-over-six window is still located in its formerly exterior wall. A stair in the hall leads to the attic story, which is not finished. This staircase appears to have been added when the original staircase was moved to the north wall, because it covers the traces of the original stair. The ceilings on this floor are unusually high.

Curatorship Boundaries

The area of responsibility (referred to as the “curatorship grounds”) for the Warrington House resident curatorship will include the house and up to 20 acres of land. The precise boundaries will be determined in consultation with the successful applicant. Any landscaping, including tree and invasive species removal, must be accomplished following an approved landscape plan and in consultation with Park staff. It is not, however, necessary to include a landscape plan with this proposal.

Current Conditions

Warrington House has not been occupied since it was acquired by the Division, but is in generally fair condition. Much of the interior and exterior woodwork and details are intact and in good condition, including the fireplace surrounds and staircase. The roof is currently intact, though the curator will want to replace it in the near future. The asbestos siding should be removed to expose the original clapboard beneath. The condition of the clapboard can then be evaluated, and damaged elements replaced as needed. Fireplaces and chimneys should be evaluated. It is clear that the western first floor fireplace has been removed and replaced with a concrete block flue for a space heater. A mock chimney stack was then boxed in to accommodate the fireplace surround. The same may have been done to the eastern first floor fireplace. The most noticeable structural problem is in the kitchen, where there appear to be problems with the floor and underlying floor joists. Heating and plumbing systems are outdated, and will need to be replaced. There is no air conditioning. The condition of the enclosed porch and rear shed should also be evaluated. There were pipes covered with asbestos in the enclosed porch, but the Division has had the asbestos removed. The Division has also had a gasoline tank in the

side yard removed. We estimate that it will cost roughly \$150,000 to renovate the house.

Significant Elements to be Retained

As it stands today, the exterior of Warrington House reflects its mid-19th century construction, while the interior, especially the first floor, has undergone some alterations in the early part of this century. The both the exterior and interior of the present kitchen reflect its construction in the late 18th to early 19th century. The resident curator(s) should seek to preserve or duplicate the architectural elements that reflect both periods of construction including (but not restricted to) the following:

1. Existing roofline on main block and ell.
2. Exterior carpentry details, including front door and door and window trim.
3. Interior carpentry details in the main block, including trim, doors, window surrounds and fireplace surrounds.
4. Double hung windows.
5. Interior carpentry details in the kitchen, including window trim, fireplace mantel, north wall paneling and winder stair.
6. Wood siding after removal of asbestos siding. Vinyl siding is not appropriate for this building.
7. Consideration should be given to removing the existing drop ceiling on the first floor to expose the original high ceiling.
8. Consideration should be given to retaining and rehabilitating the three primary agricultural buildings, including the barn to the west of the house, the garage to the east of the house, and the single story building behind and perpendicular to the house. No demolition may be undertaken without approval from the Division. The number of outbuildings to be retained will be based in part on the size of the curatorship property.

Special Considerations

Warrington House has been evaluated as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as an example of the application of high style Italianate features to a vernacular residence style typical of rural Sussex County.

The curators should seek to preserve the architectural elements that make the property eligible for this recognition. In general, all proposed work elements should conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation, accessed at

http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_8_2.htm.