

TOP COTTAGE

Cultural Landscape Report

Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt
Institute and the National Park
Service
Hyde Park, New York

Project Data

Date: 2001-2002
Size: Historic Core: 5 acres
Total Site: 40.5 acres
Context: Mid-Hudson River Valley

Goals & Objectives

Develop a restoration and implementation plan appropriate for this historic vernacular landscape

- Research and document the landscape's history, changes and current conditions.
- Identify the most suitable treatment for the character defining landscape features.
- Restore the landscape to April 1945.
- Establish the landscape as a visitor destination and special events facility.



Circa 1939 (FDR Library)



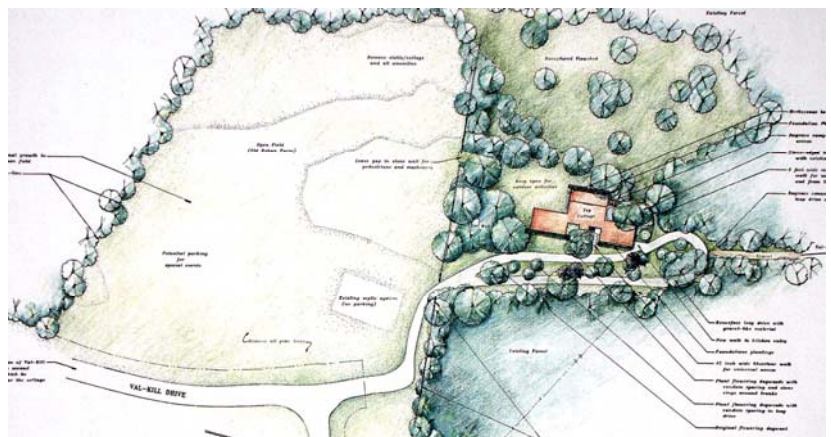
Existing Conditions - Dec. 2000 (TJE)

Project Description:

Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945) and Thomas Jefferson are the only Presidents to have designed their owned residences. In 1938, FDR designed and built Top Cottage, a stone Dutch Colonial Revival style cottage, on a wooded hill overlooking the Hudson River in New York State. It was his retreat, away from the numerous visitors that called on him when he was at Springwood, his family's home in Hyde Park, New York. He planned to write and relax at the cottage after his final term as President of the United States. Unfortunately, he died in April 1945 before realizing his dream.

Today, as it was for FDR, Top Cottage is tucked into the woods, though its context has changed as a result of suburban sprawl. The cottage is located approximately 3 miles east of the Hudson River and its vehicular access is presently through a single-family residential subdivision.

Elmore Design Collaborative, Inc. prepared a Cultural Landscape Report in association with John G. Waite Associates Architects, PLLC (Lead Consultant), which recommended specific strategies for improving the site's integrity, appearance and relationship to the broader landscape. Work included scholarly archival research from primary sources, detailed site assessment (inventory, analysis and evaluation), an analysis of significance and integrity, treatment recommendations, budget projections, and the development of an Existing Conditions Plan, a Period of Significance Plan, and a Restoration Plan. When fully implemented, these improvements will restore this historic vernacular landscape to April 1945 and provide visitors with a sense of what FDR's retreat was like during his residency. Our CLR received a **2003 Honor Award** from the Connecticut Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.



Restoration Plan