The Breakers
Newport, Rhode Island
Cultural Landscape Report

Prepared for
The Preservation Society
of Newport County

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Abstract 4

Historical Overview 5

Scope of Work and Methodology 6

Description of Study Boundaries 9

Summary of Findings 9

## PART I: DOCUMENTATION AND EVALUATION

### Site History

- Colonial Period to 1877 11
- Lorillard Occupancy of the Peabody & Stearns Villa, 1877 – 1885 17
- Vanderbilt Occupancy of the Peabody & Stearns Villa, 1885 – 1892 30
- Vanderbilt Occupancy of the Richard Morris Hunt Palazzo, 1893 – 1938 51
- Post-Hurricane Vanderbilt Occupancy and Management by the Preservation Society of Newport County, 1938 – present 103

### Existing Conditions

- Overview of Existing Conditions 154
- Character Zones 156

### Landscape Characteristics

- Natural Systems and Features 159
- Land Use 159
- Cultural Traditions 159
- Spatial Organization 160
- Cluster Arrangement 162
- Circulation 164
- Buildings and Structures 166
- Topography and Hydrology 168
Landscape Characteristics (Continued)

- Vegetation
- Views and Vistas
- Site Features

Significance and Integrity

- National Register/National Historic Landmark Status
- Landscape Classification
- Statement of Significance
- Period of Significance
- Evaluation of Integrity
- Character-Defining Features

PART II: TREATMENT

- Management Philosophy
- Treatment Definitions
- Determining Treatment
- Guiding Principles
- Treatment Recommendations by Character Zone

SOURCES CITED
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Abstract

The Breakers, located in Newport, Rhode Island, was developed during America's Gilded Age when many of the country's wealthiest families sought property along the town's dramatic Atlantic Ocean coastline. Recognized as a significant contributor to American cultural history, the house and its designed landscape are today preserved as a museum on a 13-acre lot, owned and operated by The Preservation Society of Newport County (PSNC). Guided by long-term planning and stewardship objectives, the PSNC commissioned Reed Hilderbrand Landscape Architects of Cambridge, MA, in collaboration with Robinson & Associates Landscape Historians of Washington, DC, to prepare a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) for The Breakers site to document its history and existing conditions, provide an analysis of its integrity and significance, and develop treatment recommendations for the preservation, interpretation, and stewardship of the property. Following the protocol outlined by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes the CLR team has developed the following report.

The Cultural Landscape Report consists of two sections. Part I is a comprehensive analysis of the site history and change over time, including its existing conditions, with a critical evaluation of the integrity and significance of the site within its historical context. The purpose of the CLR Part I is to provide documentary research of the property and guide the development of Part II, which includes a statement on the management philosophy and recommendations for the treatment of The Breakers. This document is intended for use by the PSNC as a resource to inform future landscape management and site development projects.

The CLR begins with a general historical overview to establish the context of the study, and follows with a description of the scope and methodology employed by the team, including the limitations and challenges of the project. Then the significance, integrity, and treatment recommendations are briefly outlined in the summary of findings. The historical narrative identifies five discrete periods of landscape development and each is illustrated with a period plan and supporting images. The history is followed by an evaluation of the existing conditions and discussions about the period of significance, the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmark status, and the significance and integrity of the various aspects of the site. Part II proposes a management philosophy and suggests revisions to the current site management strategy. It introduces the four possible treatments as defined by the National Park Service and expresses appropriate treatment recommendations for each landscape zone and contributing feature of the site, illustrated by a treatment plan.
Historical Overview

Principal landscape development at The Breakers began in the 1870s, when the new landowner Pierre Lorillard IV commissioned engineer and landscape designer Ernest W. Bowditch to design a picturesque landscape surrounding the Queen Anne revival-style villa designed by the eminent Boston-based firm of Peabody & Stearns. Bowditch’s scheme for the property embodied the language and expression of the picturesque landscape design tradition, which was being pursued during this period by such proponents as A.J. Downing and Frederick Law Olmsted. The Bowditch landscape of this era of the site’s development reflected features consistent with the contemporary trends, with plantings composed largely of informal groupings of specimen trees, ornamental trees, and shrubs, organized loosely to define expansive areas of open lawn or meadow, all coalescing to achieve an idealized pastoral effect. The landscape was further organized by a grand open lawn on the east ocean side, an oval drive for arrival at the house in the protected northwest quadrant of the lot, and serpentine paths that were woven through massings of informal plantings along the property’s perimeter. In 1882-84, Bowditch designed Vinland, the neighboring property to the north owned by Lorillard’s cousin Catharine Lorillard Wolfe, and in 1888 James J. Van Alen commissioned Bowditch for Wakehurst across Ochre Point Avenue from Vinland. The historic record reflects many of the same features used on all three properties, strengthening Bowditch’s vision of Ochre Point as one continuous parkland landscape.¹

In 1885, Cornelius Vanderbilt II bought The Breakers from Lorillard and commissioned the same architect to design an expansion to the main house and to build a children's cottage north of the house. He also commissioned Lord & Burnham of New York to design a greenhouse located in the northwest corner of the lot. Ernest Bowditch revised the landscape design to accommodate these new additions. In 1892, the Peabody & Stearns villa burned, and Vanderbilt hired architect Richard Morris Hunt to design its replacement. Though much creative license was granted, Vanderbilt restricted Hunt to the general footprint of the former villa to preserve the many specimen trees around the property. Hunt, a student of the emerging Beaux Arts movement, designed an elaborate Italianate palazzo with a series of terraces around the house, including parterre gardens, limestone balustrades, a profusion of statuary, and an imposing stone and iron fence with grand iron gates around the perimeter of the property. Vanderbilt asked Ernest Bowditch once again to rework the landscape design while preserving the tree canopy. Bowditch solicited the help of his brother James, a forester, for the project, and together they designed a scheme that incorporated existing trees and proposed new trees of European Beech and maple, to make up a more extensive canopy that defined casual areas of open lawn. Two pin oak allées were planted to frame the views along the west and north drives to the palazzo forecourt. The

design also incorporated portions of the existing serpentine path along the property’s perimeter into a discrete feature of the new plan.²

The Breakers was originally conceived as a picturesque, park-like landscape with meandering paths through dense plant masses and grand canopy trees arching over open lawn. In the 1893 rendition of The Breakers, Richard Morris Hunt, a student of the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, introduced more formal elements to the existing landscape. The central axis of the house was extended diagonally to the northwest limit of the property and marked with a stone column along the serpentine walk. The original paths were re-envisioned as a flower garden walk in a more cultivated, formalized language; planted in a layered manner, with low flowering annuals and herbaceous perennials lining the path, backed by arcs of evergreen shrubs of varying heights. Plant types changed as one moved along the path and arced with the meandering configuration of the path, providing a cinematic experience through a variety of defined garden spaces with controlled views of the palazzo and ocean. The resulting landscape was a confluence of the picturesque and classical styles. Early photographs of the 1877-1892 Breakers illustrate influences from Victorian-era garden design as well, denoted by low bedding plantings, neatly maintained borders, and masses of exotic plants. The influence appears to have persisted into the 1893 design, employed by the colorful herbaceous layer of exotic plants and the low annual border along the walk. The Victorian style was perhaps brought to The Breakers by the gardening staff and general horticultural trends in Newport throughout the Gilded Age. This layering of multiple design styles suggests a unique richness and complexity of The Breakers landscape that is worthy of further study.

Scope of Work and Methodology

The Preservation Society of Newport County commissioned this Cultural Landscape Report to be completed in conjunction with plans to develop a new Welcome Center that will replace the temporary ticketing and interpretive exhibit tent and portable restrooms for visitors. Prior to any site alterations, best management practices recommend a comprehensive evaluation of history, integrity, and significance to determine the most appropriate treatment option for a historical landscape. The initial scope of work, completed by Reed Hilderbrand Landscape Architects and Epstein Joslin Architects in May 2013 included historic documentation and evaluation of integrity and significance focused primarily on the northwest quadrant of the site, which built on twenty years of site research by PSNC historian John Tschirch, to determine a proposed site for the new Welcome Center program. This report builds on the preliminary study of the Welcome Center area to include the entirety of the site and a more in-depth investigation into a multitude of repositories that will guide future projects to enhance the character and interpretation of the site.

² Ibid.
The Breakers Cultural Landscape Report

The content, format, and objectives of this report follow the guidelines for preparing a Cultural Landscape Report as set forth in the National Park Service publication *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques* (1998). As such, this report includes a site history, existing conditions description, an analysis and evaluation of integrity and significance, and treatment recommendations. The NPS guidelines also provided the process for conducting work and formatting the report.

Research methods used in the preparation of this report included the examination of both primary and secondary resources. Primary source material included historic photographs, atlases, an 1895 site plan, nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century periodicals, and archival documentation including correspondence and maintenance reports related to the site, among other sources. Extensive research was carried out at the following repositories: The Preservation Society of Newport County Archives, Newport, Rhode Island; the Newport Historical Society, Newport, Rhode Island; the Redwood Library and Athenaeum, Newport, Rhode Island; the Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts; the MIT Museum Collections, Cambridge, Massachusetts; the Prints and Photographs Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; the Geography and Map Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; the Archives of American Gardens, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; and the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Secondary source material included books and articles on Ernest W. Bowditch and Richard Morris Hunt and manuscripts on garden design and landscape history. Publications such as Harriet Jackson Phelps’ *Newport in Flower: A History of Newport’s Horticultural Heritage* provided background on local gardens and gardeners. National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmark documentation on The Breakers and nearby historic districts provided contextual material related to Newport’s developmental and architectural history. Lastly, the analysis and evaluations in John Tschirch’s 1999 essay on The Breakers in *The Journal of the New England Garden History Society* and in Martin Perschler’s 1993 landscape study provided knowledgeable insights into the landscape design and its significance.

Research on the existing conditions of the landscape at The Breakers was conducted through a series of on-site evaluations by the CLR team as well as surveys and inventories performed by others. Site evaluations, occurring throughout the summer and fall of 2013, involved the documentation of physical evidence of the landscape's original design and subsequent modifications. Former and current groundskeepers and staff were available on site to address questions on undocumented modifications, and provide access. Site inventories included a full-site survey completed by National Surveyors-Developers, Woonsocket, RI, in September 2013, and The Breakers site tree inventory tracked by Bartlett Tree Experts, ongoing since 1993. Bartlett also used tree core sampling techniques to determine the age of specific trees selected by the CLR team during the research phase of this report.
In spite of an extensive research phase, there remain some information gaps for which little or no evidence of the historic conditions has been found to date. These include, but are not limited to, photographs of the stables and greenhouses from the era of the Peabody & Stearns’ Breakers, photographs of the service areas on the north side of The Breakers and the north side of the caretaker’s cottage, and planting layout details. At this time, no site layout plans, material plans, or planting plans have surfaced. However, one original plan of the underground water and drainage system was found. This detailed drawing suggests additional site related construction documents may have been developed and issued during the design of the property.

At the time of study, all accessible repositories were exhausted. However, it is possible that additional information is contained in private collections or locations to which there was no direct access at the time of this report (such as Vanderbilt Family Archives). If additional information surfaces, it may be added as an appendix to this CLR for added depth of understanding in specific areas or date ranges. However, based on the professional opinion of the CLR team and all research to date, it is unlikely that the analysis of existing conditions and conclusions of significance and integrity would be significantly affected by additional evidence.
Description of Study Boundaries

The Breakers occupies a 13-acre site at the southern end of Ochre Point Avenue, bordered on the north by Shepard Avenue, the west by Ochre Point Ave, and on the south by Ruggles Ave. The dramatic shoreline cliffs of the Atlantic Ocean define the eastern boundary. Part I of this report covers the entirety of the site as described above; Part II is focused on the parts of the site that The Preservation Society of Newport County has purview over the management. It excludes the Newport Cliff Walk, which is managed and maintained by Newport Parks.

The site directly to the north of The Breakers, formerly called Vinland and owned by a cousin of Pierre Lorillard but now under the ownership of Salve Regina University, as well as Wakehurst located across the street from Vinland, are other properties of interest as they were also designed by Bowditch in the 1880s. Historic maps show the entrance drive of the 1877 Breakers had the same contour as those of Vinland and Wakehurst, supporting the assertion that Bowditch envisaged these three properties working together to create a single harmonious landscape. Further study of these properties in adjacency to The Breakers could offer greater insight into the larger design intent.

The cultural and historical context of The Breakers is another relevant area of research for this report. This context includes the professional background of the landscape designer, Ernest Bowditch, and influential trends of the time; from nation-wide paradigm shifts in landscape design to local horticultural trends in Newport during the Gilded Age, which depended on collaborative relationships among gardeners of many Newport estates. The offsite stables and greenhouses located on Coggeshall Avenue are additional resources for this extended context, though they were not included in the scope of this report.

Summary of Findings

The Breakers holds regional and national significance as a historic designed landscape by virtue of its association with the life of Cornelius Vanderbilt II (1843-1899) and Alice Vanderbilt (1845-1934), culturally influential figures in the industrial and societal histories of the United States. It also displays the artistry of two nationally recognized designers – architect Richard Morris Hunt and landscape designer Ernest W. Bowditch – the horticultural expertise of James Bowditch, the tireless work of staff gardeners Richard Gardner and Robert Laurie, and the collaborative relationships among designers, gardeners, and horticulturists of the era. The Breakers' landscape reflects distinguishing characteristics of multiple design styles prevalent at the time of its development, predominantly the picturesque tradition which employed canopy trees and understory plantings to define expansive lawns; the Beaux Arts tradition as identified by the classically ordered parterre garden terraces and the approach drives to the front entrance; and the Victorian style that can be read in the colorful palette of exotic plants and annual flowers that populated the terraces, garden beds and borders. The confluence of these

3 Ibid.
styles, which represents an assimilation of design influences from two continents across several decades, is particularly evident in the unique scale, form, and articulation of the serpentine garden walk along the property’s perimeter. This feature, originally a meandering path through a picturesque landscape and later transformed to an element of the Beaux Arts with formal plantings creating a series of garden rooms, serves as a particularly strong example of the amalgamation of design styles in late 19th century American gardens.

The National Historic Landmark nomination for The Breakers defines the period of significance as the six-year range from 1893, when Hunt’s palazzo first went under construction, to the death of Cornelius Vanderbilt in 1899. While the NHL nomination recognizes the gardens and grounds as an integral component of the resource, the documentation does not provide a comprehensive analysis of the significance of the historic designed landscape. This CLR broadens the current understanding of The Breakers’ landscape as it has been previously documented and presents a more substantial analysis of the landscape’s significance. Evidence suggests that the landscape had not yet achieved the intended character by 1899 – the end date of the period of significance defined by the NHL nomination – but continued to mature throughout the early twentieth century. Alice Vanderbilt, as well as the gardeners she employed, actively stewarded the landscape throughout her lifetime, hosting extravagant events on the grounds for which the gardens provided the setting. In order to encompass the time frame in which the gardens and landscape were used and maintained according to the original design intent under the tenure of the Vanderbilt family, this CLR identifies an extension of the period of significance to 1938, the year that a hurricane caused massive destruction to the landscape and family use diminished.

A comparative study of the historic and contemporary conditions associated with The Breakers’ site indicates that the landscape retains a moderate to high level of integrity, with varying levels for each of the eight character zones that comprised the original landscape. This report identifies elements of the original design that have been lost or altered, other elements that have survived the years and should be preserved, and still others that have been added since the period of significance and now negatively impact the historic character of the site.

The treatment recommendations for the property are determined by analyzing the integrity of the site weighted against the availability of historic evidence and contemporary needs and resources. The National Park Service identifies four possible treatments for a historic resource: Preservation, Restoration, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction. The primary treatment for The Breakers landscape is rehabilitation, with the intention of reflecting the form, features, and character of the property as it appeared during the period of significance, 1893-1938. Rehabilitation is appropriate because the overall integrity of the site is moderate, there is an ample amount of documentation across much, but not all, of the site; and the management objectives of the Preservation Society are to reestablish the character of the historic landscape, though contemporary needs of the museum require moderate alterations. Part II of this report includes thorough descriptions of the treatment recommendations by landscape character zones, and more detailed treatment actions for specific features.
SITE HISTORY

COLONIAL PERIOD TO 1877

Newport, Rhode Island, founded in 1639, is located on the southern end of Aquidneck Island in the Narragansett Bay. During the Colonial period, Newport’s industries included farming, fishing, and shipbuilding. As Newport’s port developed, fortunes were also amassed through the African slave trade. By the mid-eighteenth century, Newport was among the most prosperous seaports on the east coast. The city’s residential and commercial development centered on its bayside port where numerous eighteenth-century structures survive today. Newport’s economic growth was profoundly altered by events of the American Revolution. The British occupied the city for nearly three years, and much of the building stock was destroyed by combatant troops. Following the war, the city’s former commercial interests failed to fully revive. Newport’s prosperity was not restored until the 1830s with the beginnings of its development as a summer resort.¹

Through the Colonial period and into the early nineteenth century, in contrast with the maritime commercial development of the port, Newport’s eastern shore was largely agricultural. This included a large tract along the Atlantic coast known as Taylor’s Point, which encompassed the present site of The Breakers. Around 1827, yellow ochre was discovered on Taylor’s farm, and the promontory on which it was located became known as Ochre Point for the distinctive color of the earth.² (It is unknown what type of farm Taylor operated, but during this period, the land was likely cleared of any existing indigenous tree population for the cultivation of crops, sheep farming, or other agricultural purposes.³)

The first step in Ochre Point’s transformation into a residential enclave for the elite of the Gilded Age occurred in the 1830s when approximately sixty acres of the former Taylor farm property were purchased by William Beach Lawrence for $12,000.⁴ Lawrence (1800-1881), a scholar of international law who would hold the office of lieutenant governor of Rhode Island from 1851 to 1852, built a house and several outbuildings on the estate.⁵ The house (date unknown, no longer extant) was one of the earliest on Ochre Point. (See Figure 1.)

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³ Preservation Society of Newport County, “Landscape,” available online at www.newportmansions.org/learn/landscape.
⁵ Not much is known today about the exact location or construction dates of Lawrence’s house (no longer extant) or the character of the grounds or outbuildings. An 1876 atlas of Newport, however, does indicate that the buildings on Lawrence’s estate were not within the present site of The Breakers. See “City Atlas of Newport, Rhode Island,” Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins, 1876.
Figure 1: In the 1830s, William Beach Lawrence purchased approximately sixty acres on the eastern shore of Newport and built a house and several outbuildings on the estate. [Image reproduced from Holbert T. Smales, The Breakers: An Illustrated Handbook (Newport, RI: Remington Ward, 1955): 8.]

As its residential development intensified beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the domestic architecture that characterized Ochre Point was commodious, but not grandiose. The houses were considered dignified summer residences that displayed “quiet good taste.” In contrast with later periods, these early summer homes reflected a desire for comfort and leisurely pleasures rather than social ambition and conspicuous display.

Newport was renowned for its mild climate as well as its natural beauty, which was often the subject of landscape paintings by leading American artists. In 1853, Rhode Island historian Edward Peterson described Newport’s picturesque character, writing: “Newport has long been justly celebrated...It is delightful to ascend the cliff where the fishermen resort, and enjoy the healthy breezes of the ocean, and contemplate the restless wave, dashing its starry foam along the rock-bound shore.” Peterson’s remarks made reference to the fisherman’s trail

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that meandered along the crest of the Newport's seaside cliffs and provided an unobstructed public footpath around the island. This shoreline trail became known as the Cliff Walk and developed into a popular recreational path for both residents and visitors of the summer colony.⁸

By the end of this period, Newport's residential development had significantly transformed its once rural eastern coastline. (See Figure 2.) Land on Ochre Point was subdivided into spacious lots, and a network of streets was laid out. By 1876, Ruggles Avenue had been established and extended its entire distance to the oceanfront. Shepard Avenue, however, did not yet reach the shoreline; its eastern boundary was Lawrence Avenue. Ochre Point Avenue had not yet been developed.⁹

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⁸ Historically and today, the Cliff Walk is a public right-of-way over private property. Improvements to the Cliff Walk by Newport estate owners starting in the late nineteenth century included making changes to the path's topography, erecting fences, and other alterations. In more recent years, local and federal funding has supported repairs and improvements to the Cliff Walk.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS: COLONIAL PERIOD TO 1877

Natural Systems and Features
The steep coastal cliffs and flat promontories characterizing the site's geomorphology during this period were the product of the natural processes that formed the island's shoreline and oceanfront bluffs. This natural morphology was a significant factor in the site's agricultural development during Newport's colonial period and through the early nineteenth century. The site was part of a high, exposed promontory that sloped gradually toward rocky and abrupt cliffs. Because these steep cliffs made the land difficult to access from the water and its remote distance from the bay and port hindered development related to Newport's early shipping and trade industries, the land was used for farming during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Later, as Newport's summer colony grew and residential development extended into the southern and eastern parts of the island, the natural features that earlier made the property undesirable became assets. The site's relatively flat topography and exposed elevation provided clear views toward the sea, and its natural open exposure offered fresh ocean breezes. These factors contributed to its residential development by the mid-nineteenth century. Another natural feature of the site during this period was a coastal geology characterized by iron-oxide-rich earth. The soil contained a naturally occurring pigment that lent the area the moniker "Ochre Point."

Spatial Organization
During this period, the spatial organization of the site was defined largely by its natural features. The ground plane was organized by the natural topography of Ochre Point, with modest variations created by functional features such as the Cliff Walk terrace and the Ruggles Avenue roadway, as well as any informal footpaths that may have traversed the site. The Cliff Walk, also referred to as a fisherman's trail during this period, followed the natural contours of the oceanfront along the eastern edge of the site. At some point during this period (date unknown), Ruggles Avenue was developed. It is unknown what type of informal circulation paths, if any, may have existed on the site in association with the Taylor property or Lawrence's estate. The vertical plane was organized around the site's natural vegetation, the character of which is unknown. (It is also unknown if the land featured fencing or other agricultural structures that may have characterized the vertical plane. Maps and atlases from the period indicate that there were no buildings on the site.) Unplanned, undefined views south and east to the ocean, as well as views toward the Taylor farmhouse and later the Lawrence house defined the overhead planes.
Land Use
Land use during this period included agricultural and residential activities. The site was part of a larger property known as Taylor’s farm from the eighteenth century through the early nineteenth century. In the 1830s, William Beach Lawrence purchased a large parcel of the Taylor farm property and built a house (date unknown) on the grounds (north of the site that would become The Breakers).¹⁰

Cultural Traditions
The development of the landscape during this period was influenced by Newport’s eighteenth- and nineteenth-century agricultural traditions as well as by Newport’s nineteenth-century patterns of residential development and construction.

Cluster Arrangement
Early maps and atlases indicate that there were no buildings on the site during this period. Similarly, there were no known agricultural or residential structures, such as barns, stables, or other outbuildings, on the site during this period.

Circulation
Known circulation features that characterized the site during this period included the Cliff Walk and Ruggles Avenue. The Cliff Walk, also referred to during this period as a fisherman’s trail, was a narrow dirt footpath located along the eastern edge of the site. The direction of the path followed the natural contours of the cliffs. It traversed the entire length of the site and extended uninterrupted to the north and south. Ruggles Avenue was a formal municipal street that extended east-west across Ochre Point, with the Cliff Walk forming its eastern terminus. Although the exact date of its development is unknown, Ruggles Avenue was most likely established near the end of this period. Later, Ruggles Avenue would come to define the southern boundary of the site, and it was the first of the site’s perimeter streets to be established. The character of the street during this period is largely unknown. Other systems of movement during this period may have included informal footpaths established for agriculture uses or for residential activities.

¹⁰ Houses such as Lawrence’s, “were designed for large and prosperous Victorian families...who would keep a reasonable number of necessary servants and a gardener or two, who would have frequent house guests and whose chief entertainments would be dinner-, tea-, and garden-parties, croquet and strolls on the grounds...” See Richard B. Harrington, National Register of Historic Places - Nomination Form, “Ochre Point-Cliffs Historic District,” October 31, 1974.
Topography
During this period, the site featured a relatively flat, natural topography characteristic of the promontory’s elevated terrain. The landscape was also characterized by the rocky cliffs along the Atlantic coast, which created a steep irregular slope at the eastern edge of the site. The Cliff Walk was another significant topographical feature of the landscape during this period. Although the exact nature of the Cliff Walk’s topography during this period is unknown, the trail may have formed a narrow terrace along the cliff edge.

Vegetation
The character of the vegetation on the site during this period is unknown.

Buildings and Structures
During this period, there were no known buildings or structures on the site.

Views and Vistas
During this period, unplanned, undefined views south and east to the ocean, as well as views toward the Taylor farmhouse and the Lawrence house, characterized the landscape.

Constructed Water Features
During this period, there were no known constructed water features on the site.

Small-Scale Features
During this period, there were no known small-scale features on the site.

Archaeological Sites
It is unknown what archaeological sites, if any, may have existed on the site during this period.

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11 For the purpose of this study, views and vistas are defined as “features that create or allow a range of vision which can be natural or designed and controlled.” See Robert R. Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan, A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1998): 53.
LORILLARD OCCUPANCY OF THE PEABODY & STEARNS VILLA, 1877-1885

In 1877, American tobacco manufacturer Pierre Lorillard IV (1833-1901) purchased a sizable parcel on Newport’s Ochre Point from William Beach Lawrence for the construction of a summer “cottage.” The 11-acre property was located on a prime oceanfront lot with Ruggles Avenue as its southern boundary. Lorillard commissioned the Boston architectural firm Peabody & Stearns to design his Newport home and landscape gardener Ernest W. Bowditch to design the grounds. The Queen Anne Revival house was constructed in 1877-78. Initially, Lorillard’s estate also included a caretaker’s cottage and stables. Later, greenhouses were added to the site. Lorillard christened his estate “The Breakers” in reference to the crashing surf along the cliff face forming the eastern edge of the grounds.

Born in Brookline, Massachusetts, Ernest W. Bowditch (1850-1918) received his higher education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he studied chemistry and mining. (See Figure 3.) In 1869, Bowditch left MIT before graduating to gain practical experience, working first for a railroad company in Nebraska then as a mineralogist on an expedition to survey the Isthmus of Darien, now known as the Isthmus of Panama, for an interoceanic canal route. Bowditch participated in the Darien expedition from mid-February through June, 1870, and then returned to Boston where he accepted a job with a civil engineering firm, working as a surveyor. Bowditch did not remain with the firm long before he established a strong professional relationship with prominent landscape gardener Richard Morris Copeland and was able to open his own surveying office.

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12 Sources differ on the size of Lorillard’s initial purchase and the price of the land. Holbert T. Smales, in his account of the history of The Breakers, The Breakers: An Illustrated Handbook, states that Lorillard purchased 11 acres from Lawrence. This is corroborated by an 1885 Baltimore Sun article. (See Smales, The Breakers: An Illustrated Handbook, 11, and “The Breakers’ Sold,” The Baltimore Sun, September 26, 1885.) A New York Times article from 1881, however, states that Lorillard purchased 10 acres. (See “Real Estate in Newport: A Farm Bought for $12,000 Now Worth a Million and a Half,” New York Times, December 28, 1881.) Similarly, there are discrepancies regarding the cost of the land. Landscape historian Martin Perschler, citing a Newport Daily News article from 1892, gives the cost as $65,000. (See Martin Perschler, “Historic Landscapes Project, The Breakers, Book One,” prepared for The Preservation Society of Newport County, 1993, citing Newport Daily News, November 26, 1892.) The New York Times and Baltimore Sun articles from 1881 and 1885, however, state that the property was purchased for $96,147 and $96,000 respectively.


14 Bowditch was born William Ernestus Bowditch, but changed his name to Ernest William Bowditch.

In 1871 or 1872, Bowditch moved his offices to 14 Devonshire Street in the same building as architects Peabody & Stearns. In his memoirs, Bowditch recounted this period of his career, writing: “This was the beginning of a business intimacy with Peabody & Stearns, and afterwards, through them, with other Architects, which has lasted through my entire professional life. Peabody & Stearns were at that time comparatively young men, who were just starting. They were very ambitious, hard-working and capable.”

Architects Robert Swain Peabody (1845-1917) and John Goddard Stearns, Jr. (1843-1917), established a partnership in 1870. Their firm was widely patronized and admired and soon rose to prominence in Boston and throughout New England. In the field of residential architecture, Peabody & Stearns designed houses of various types and experimented with a wide range of styles. The firm’s respected reputation secured it a spot “high on


the list of favored architects” among Newport’s elite, making it a natural choice for Pierre Lorillard’s summer residence.18

Bowditch criticized architects who presumed to “attend to all collateral landscape work, though their knowledge of the work of grading, draining, planting and even landscape designing is next to nothing,” but purported to have a strong working relationship with Peabody & Stearns, and it was due to his association with the firm that he received the commission to design the landscape for Lorillard’s Newport estate.19 He credited his professional association with Peabody & Stearns for being awarded the Lorillard job as well as for his later work designing Vinland, the neighboring estate of Catharine Lorillard Wolfe, writing: “The first large country place of moment which I was asked to plan was one for Pierre Lorillard, at Ochre Point, Newport, which came directly through Peabody & Stearns. It was thoroughly successful, and shortly thereafter Mr. Lorillard’s cousin, Miss Wolfe, decided to build a house at Ochre Point, immediately next the Lorillard house, and I was called in consultation.”20 Bowditch’s early work for the Lorillard family established him as one of the first professional landscape designers to work in Newport.21

[To date, a landscape plan, plant list, or other historic documents relating to Bowditch’s design for Lorillard’s Newport estate have not been located. Additionally, Bowditch’s personal papers (archived at the Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts) include only brief references to his work for Lorillard on The Breakers. Similarly, Bowditch’s papers provide little insight into his design theory or professional influences. Although a small set of historic photographs offers a record of The Breakers’ landscape during this period, the images focus on documenting the Peabody & Stearns house rather than site features and plant materials. Historic atlases provide some information regarding the location of buildings, streets, and circulation features.]

Lorillard’s house faced southeast toward the water and was situated in the middle of a carefully graded, nearly level site that sloped gradually toward the cliffs and provided sweeping views of the ocean. (See Figures 4-5.) In order to establish and maintain clear open views east and south to the ocean, outbuildings, including a caretaker’s cottage and stables, were located on the western edge of the property along Ochre Point Avenue. (See Figure 6.) Thus, the service, or back-of-the-house, area of the site was defined during this period as the northwest quadrant of the property, despite the fact that the primary approach to the house was from Ochre Point Avenue on the west. An ovoid entrance drive and a network of curvilinear paths crossed the site, providing connections between buildings and access to the Cliff Walk. Bowditch’s landscape featured a smooth, verdant

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18 Ibid., 120.
20 Ibid.
turf lawn and a combination of largely informal groupings of specimen trees, ornamental trees, shrubs, and naturalistic elements that reflected the nineteenth-century aesthetic principles of the picturesque. Southwest of the house, groups of low shrubs and evergreens as well as patterned beds flanked the entrance drive and adjacent footpath. The influence of Victorian-era garden design was evident in the use of exotic plants, such as yucca palms, and carpet bedding along the footpaths. (See Figure 4.) The oval turf lawn created by the entrance drive was planted with deciduous trees; low shrubs, potted plants, and additional planted beds adorned the lawn’s outer edge. (See Figure 5.) Extending north of the house was a massing of deciduous and evergreen trees with an understory of small shrubs. (See Figure 5.) This massing of trees may have been designed to frame views of the house and create pleasant, shaded routes through the site.

Figure 4: Pierre Lorillard’s The Breakers, looking north, no date. Vegetation during this period included low shrubs, conifers, and patterned beds. The circular beds south of the house (in center of photo) featured repeated patterns and borders of small stones, bricks, or shells. [Photo courtesy The Preservation Society of Newport County.]
Figure 5: Pierre Lorillard’s The Breakers, looking east, no date. During this period, the oval turf lawn west of the house was planted with deciduous and evergreen trees, low shrubs, and potted plants. Note also the character of the oval entrance drive and small-scale features such as the concave drainage grates. [Photo courtesy The Preservation Society of Newport County.]
Contemporary newspaper accounts indicate that Lorillard made at least two purchases of additional land on Ochre Point in 1879. One of the transactions may have been for a separate parcel (noncontiguous with The Breakers) on which he built greenhouses and cutting gardens.22 A few years later, in 1882, Lorillard acquired more land, enlarging The Breakers estate to 13 acres.23 (Documentation related to the Vanderbilt greenhouses

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23 The deed transferring the property from Lorillard to Vanderbilt references land acquired by Lorillard from James N. Platt on March 27, 1882, and from George Atkinson on August 26, 1882. It is unknown which part of the property was acquired at this
indicates that Lorillard had greenhouses at The Breakers as well as off site. Although Lorillard’s greenhouses do not appear on historic atlases or in historic photographs identified to date, the Vanderbilt documentation suggests that the greenhouses were located in the northwest corner of the site in close proximity to the other outbuildings on the grounds.)

In 1882, Ernest Bowditch resumed his professional association with Peabody & Stearns as well as the Lorillard family when he received the commission to design the grounds of Vinland along Ochre Point Avenue north of The Breakers. Vinland was built for Pierre Lorillard’s cousin, Catharine Lorillard Wolfe, and also designed by Peabody & Stearns. Bowditch worked with his brother James H. Bowditch (b. 1846), a forester, to implement the project. Ernest Bowditch also designed the grounds of Wakehurst, the estate of James J. Van Alen located immediately west of Vinland. In laying out The Breakers, Vinland, and Wakehurst, Bowditch envisioned a unified landscape experience among Ochre Point’s seaside estates. This aesthetic sensibility evokes Bowditch’s later park designs, in which he created linear landscapes that often encompassed distinct elements but formed an integrated continuous parkland.

In his memoirs, Bowditch described experiencing great difficulty finding fill material to satisfactorily grade The Breakers in order to create its smooth turf lawn. He encountered the same difficulty when laying out Vinland. Compounding the issue at Vinland was Bowditch’s desire to build a small artificial hill along the north edge of the property to block the noise and disturbances created by residents of the neighboring parcel. Bowditch’s solution was to lower the grade of the Cliff Walk, depressing the trail nine feet, and use the displaced earth to create the desired embankment. Describing the project, Bowditch also noted that lowering the Cliff Walk gave the added benefit of making the house appear a more prominent feature on the site. He wrote: “Then the thought occurred that while the Cliff Walk – which bordered both Wolfe and Lorillard estates – was a public path, yet there was no reason why the level of it should be continued as it then was; and by lowering it the house would not only be apparently more ‘set up’ above the natural surface than it actually was, but ample material for building [the embankment] would be secured, where the haul was short and the cost would be at a minimum.”

Another implicit benefit of changing the topography of the Cliff Walk was added privacy, as public users of the trail would no longer have direct views of the house and property. It is unclear from Bowditch’s writings if the segment of the Cliff Walk that passed across The Breakers’ property was also regraded at this time.

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24 Typewritten manuscript in Box 17 Folder 10: Typescript memoirs on work-related topics, undated; Series III: Ernest William Bowditch (1850-1918) Papers; MSS3 Bowditch Family Papers, Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum.

25 Notable examples of Bowditch’s park designs include Cleveland’s Rockefeller Park and Shaker Lakes Park in Cleveland’s eastern suburb. See Birnbaum and Karson, Pioneers of American Landscape Design, 32-35.

26 Typewritten manuscript in Box 17 Folder 10: Typescript memoirs on work-related topics, undated; Series III: Ernest William Bowditch (1850-1918) Papers; MSS3 Bowditch Family Papers, Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum.
During this period, the care and maintenance of Newport’s elaborate gardens and landscapes was managed by a team of gardeners and greenhouse men, typically led by a head gardener. The first head gardener to work at The Breakers was Richard Gardner (b. 1852). In 1881, Gardner immigrated to the United States from England and took a position with his brother as a gardener at Lorillard’s estate in Jobstown, New Jersey. The following year, in 1882, he was asked to move to Newport to work at The Breakers.27 (It is unknown if Lorillard employed a head gardener at The Breakers prior to retaining Gardner. Gardner would continue his association with The Breakers for several years following the transfer of the property from Lorillard to Vanderbilt.)

The importance of head gardeners in the development of Newport’s horticultural legacy cannot be overstated. Competition among estates and technological advances in greenhouse design encouraged horticultural experimentation. Newport’s estate gardeners imported rare specimen trees and cultivated exotic plant species. A contemporary account of Newport’s gardens describes the achievements of the landscape designers and the hours of hard work by devoted gardeners: “Aquidneck Island...never looked more lovely than on this bright, breezy, exhilarating June morning. Her new robe of vivid green, artfully brocaded with flowers of every hue, is without a speck or crease to mar its aristocratic elegance. Every villa has been furbished until it looks as though just erected. The grass is everywhere a precisely-shaven lawn, and the roads and pathways seem too nice to step upon. The grand old trees and spreading bushes, clustering in such profusion in every lot, are clad in a luxuriance of foliage that suggests a hot-house training. The apparently studied picturesqueness of the cliffs also gives a notion of the landscape gardeners skills, and the bordering sea has a fresh and limpid appearance, as though it too had passed through the hands of the renovator.”28

In 1885, Pierre Lorillard sold The Breakers to railroad magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt II (1843-1899) for $400,000. A deed recording the transfer of property dated October 12, 1885, reads: “All that parcel of land...with all buildings and improvements thereon being the estate Known as The Breakers, now and heretofore the summer residence of said grantor, bounded Northerly on Shephard [sic] Avenue and Ruggles Ave., not as yet being highways and said granted land being all the same conveyed to said Lorillard date of August 28, 1877 and recorded in Volume 48, p. 41 L.E.B. of Newport, RI; a deed from James N. Platt and other executors & trustees dated March 27, 1882 and recorded in Volume 52, p. 485, and a deed from George Atkinson, exec. dated August 26, 1882, Volume 52, p. 540.”29

27 Eudenbach, Estate Gardeners of Newport, 39.
LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS: 1877-1885

Natural Systems and Features
The steep coastal cliffs and flat promontory that characterized the site’s geomorphology during this period were the product of the natural processes that formed the island’s shoreline and oceanfront bluffs. This natural morphology was a significant factor in the site’s residential development during this period. The site’s relatively flat, high location and projection into the water provided clear views toward the sea; its open exposure offered fresh, salubrious ocean breezes. The site’s humid, damp climate also created a condition in which plants thrived, fostering the development of a community that flourished in horticultural expression and proficiency.

Spatial Organization
The site’s spatial organization during this period served to create a distinct physical and visual separation between the main house and the service areas. On the ground plane, the space was defined by the rectilinear grid of the municipal perimeter roads and by the naturalistic course of the Cliff Walk. The ground plane was further articulated by an oval entrance drive, social/recreational footpaths, and functional paths/access drives. (Note that during this period, Lorillard’s land holdings increased in area from 11 to 13 acres.) Topographically, the site was graded to create an artificial high point for the house. On the vertical plane, the site’s spatial organization was defined primarily by the massing of the house, which rose in the center of the site above the tree canopy, and by the steep drop-off along the cliff face. Clusters of trees also articulated the vertical plane and, in the area north of the house, provided a visual transition from the house to the ground plane. (During this period, the tree canopy was relatively immature.) Other prominent vertical elements, such as the caretaker’s cottage, the stables, and later the greenhouse were clustered and set back along the western perimeter of the site to maintain the visual prominence of the house. Overhead planes during this period were defined by views and vistas. These included the principal 360-degree view from the house’s prominent octagonal tower, views to the house from points along the entrance drive, periodic views of the house from the Cliff Walk, and periodic views of the house and the ocean from the footpaths.

Land Use
Although specifics are unknown, during this period, the site was used primarily as a seasonal residence, accommodating all of its associated social and recreational uses. The land also supported maintenance and back-of-the-house activities taking place in service and support buildings. Horses were housed in the stables. Greenhouses were used to propagate and winterize plants. The caretaker’s cottage provided housing for support staff who may have maintained residency throughout the year, rather than seasonally.
Cultural Traditions
The development of the landscape during this period was influenced by Newport’s Gilded Age patterns of residential growth and construction. As such, the design and implementation of the landscape was not restrained by financial limitations, and Lorillard worked with prominent designers on the estate, including landscape architect Ernest W. Bowditch. The landscape development during this period was also influenced by Newport’s growth as a summer colony. As such, the landscape was designed primarily for seasonal use, and the house and likely some plantings were winterized when the property was not occupied. Cultural traditions and influences of the property’s head gardener, whose horticultural practices shaped land use, also impacted the landscape development during this period.

Cluster Arrangement
The arrangement of structures in the landscape during this period reflected the residential character of the grounds. The house was given primacy in the center of the site and faced southeast toward the water. Outbuildings, including the caretaker’s cottage, stables, and later the greenhouses were clustered on the western edge of the grounds in the northwest quadrant of the site.

Circulation
An 1883 atlas of Newport illustrates the circulation system at The Breakers during this period. Historic photographs provide additional detail. Municipal roads defined the boundaries of the property on three sides. These perimeter roads included Shepard Avenue on the north, Ochre Point Avenue on the west, and Ruggles Avenue on the south. Ochre Point Avenue was improved with a 6-inch water pipe and two fire hydrants. Shepard Avenue was partially laid out, with the eastern half consisting of a gently undulating path that terminated in a circular oceanfront overlook. The Cliff Walk followed the general contour of the shoreline along the eastern edge of the site. The Cliff Walk extended north and south of the property lines to form a continuous path through adjacent estates.

The site’s internal circulation system linked all aspects of the landscape design. The drives and paths were curvilinear and naturalistic in character and, based on historic photographs, carefully manicured. The principal circulation feature was the oval entrance drive, located west of the house. Upon entering the grounds from Ochre Point Avenue, the entrance drive passed the caretaker’s cottage, turned slightly south, turned north to the house’s entrance porch, and then looped around past the stables to form an oval. To accommodate horses and carriages, the entrance drive was greater in width than the secondary paths.
Secondary circulation features included a series of social/recreational footpaths as well as functional paths/access drives. A northern path extended south from a point midway along Shepard Avenue (where there was presumably a gate to the street) then split into two branches. One branch looped around to the front of the house and another continued east where it connected with the Cliff Walk. A southern path started at the house's south façade and led west, following the curve of the oval entrance drive toward Ochre Point Avenue, turned south to follow the western perimeter of the property, and finally curved east along the southern perimeter until it converged with the Cliff Walk. (This alignment of the southern path marks the first evidence of the configuration of the southern section of The Breakers’ serpentine walk as it existed during the period of significance.) A third, C-shaped path started from the north façade, connected briefly with the northern path, looped south where it crossed the lawn created by the oval drive, and ended at its intersection with the southern path. Functional paths provided access from the oval entrance drive and the footpaths to the outbuildings. The location and type of paths that provided access to the greenhouses is unknown.

The paving material from this period is unknown, but appears in historic photographs to be compact earth or pea gravel. Historic photographs indicate that there was no curbing along the drives or edging along the footpaths.

**Topography**
While the site featured a relatively flat topography characteristic of the Ochre Point’s natural terrain, during this period the land was regraded prior to the construction of the Peabody & Stearns villa. Based on historic photographs, the house was placed on a slight mound. It is unknown if there was a change in elevation (natural or manmade) between the lawn and the Cliff Walk. Other topographical features included the steep, irregular drop-off along the cliffs to the ocean.

**Vegetation**
(The character of the vegetation during this period is based on a limited number of historic photographs that primarily focus on the house. No written descriptions of the landscape have been identified to date.)

Bowditch’s landscape consisted of a combination of arboreal and garden planting. South and east of the house was a smooth, verdant turf lawn. Southwest of the house on either side of the southern footpath that extended west from the south façade were groups of low shrubs and evergreens as well as patterned beds. A series of circular planted beds on the south side of the path appear to repeat their patterns and featured borders composed of small stones, bricks, or shells. Within the oval entrance drive west of the house was a turf lawn planted with young deciduous trees. Along the perimeter of this lawn were small groups of low shrubs and evergreen trees, potted standards, and planted beds or flower gardens. Extending north of the house was a
The treatment of the vegetation along the perimeter of the site during this period is largely unknown. A map of Newport from 1878 illustrates the landscape of The Breakers, although its accuracy cannot be verified using historic photographs or written records. (See Figure 7.) The map indicates a continuous row of trees along Ruggles Avenue and a row of trees along the northern footpath, as well as a less dense grouping of trees along part of the Cliff Walk. The entrance treatments are unknown, as well as the character of the vegetation around the outbuildings.

Figure 7: Detail from “Newport, R.I.,” New York: Galt & Hoy, 1878. [Image courtesy the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.]
**Buildings and Structures**

During this period, several buildings were added to the site. These included the Peabody & Stearns house (1877-78), caretaker’s cottage (1877-78), and stables (1877-78), and the greenhouses (date unknown).

**Views and Vistas**

During this period, the landscape was characterized by uninterrupted, panoramic views generally east and southeast from the house to the ocean; panoramic 360-degree views from house’s octagonal tower; views from the Cliff Walk to the ocean; periodic views along the Cliff Walk to the house; views approaching the house from the oval entrance drive; and views from the footpaths to the house and the ocean.

**Constructed Water Features**

During this period, there were no known constructed water features on the site.

**Small-Scale Features**

During this period, known small-scale features included the concave oval drainage grates in the entrance drive.

**Archaeological Sites**

It is unknown what archaeological sites may have existed on the site during this period.
VANDERBILT OCCUPANCY OF THE PEABODY & STEARNS VILLA, 1885-1892

After taking possession of The Breakers, Cornelius Vanderbilt hired its original architects, Peabody & Stearns, to renovate parts of the house, build an addition (the north service wing), and design a freestanding children’s playhouse, later known as the children’s cottage. Also, working with the house’s original landscape architect, Ernest W. Bowditch, and head gardener, Richard Gardner, Vanderbilt expanded the greenhouses, which were located in the far northwest corner of the site, installed a sewer system, and made other landscape improvements (described below). A contemporary newspaper account describes the architectural and landscape improvements made by Vanderbilt upon acquiring The Breakers:

The improvements being made to the Lorillard villa, recently purchased by Cornelius Vanderbilt, alone furnish employment to at least 80 men, and the scene there presented is a most busy one. The addition formerly used as a kitchen is being torn down to make space for the erection of an elegant dining room, and a new building is being built at the end of this for a kitchen. This latter addition is entirely of wood, while the lower story of that for the dining room is of Philadelphia pressed brick with sandstone trimmings, the same as the main building. In addition to this work a large main sewer, with tributaries from the lodge, stables, and villas, is being laid from the greenhouses to the ocean, and three new greenhouses and a fernery are being built. The largest greenhouse is to be 26 by 82 feet for the growing of palms, and the other two will be in pits, 11 by 82 feet each, for the growing of water lilies. The fernery is to be 14 by 36, and is placed at the rear of the greenhouses. All this work is being pushed at the same time, each branch being distinct from the other. Many alterations and improvements are also being made to the finish off the interior of the main building.

The children’s cottage, located to the north of the main house, was completed in 1886 for $5,000. (See Figures 8-10.) A single-story, freestanding, two-room playhouse, the children’s cottage was designed to complement the style of the main house. It featured intersecting gable roofs punctuated by a prominent brick chimney, bay windows, and a large open porch facing the ocean. (Today, the children’s cottage is the only remnant of Peabody & Stearns’ work on the estate.)

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30 In 1885, Bowditch was also commissioned to design the summer resort community of Tuxedo Park, New York, for Pierre Lorillard IV, continuing his professional association with the Lorillard family.
Figure 8: Children’s cottage, looking southwest, ca. 1885-93. During this period, the landscape immediately surrounding the children’s cottage was characterized by small trees, shrubs, and planted beds or flower gardens. [Photo courtesy the Newport Historical Society.]
Figure 9: Children's cottage, looking north, ca. 1885-93. Note that ivy, supported on wire mesh, was trained to grow up the base of the structure. [Photo courtesy The Preservation Society of Newport County.]
Between the fall of 1886 and the spring of 1887, Vanderbilt had the greenhouses (originally built by Lorillard) improved and enlarged with the construction of a palm house, as well as other associated features. (See Figures 11-12.) The alterations and new construction were coordinated by Bowditch, who worked in close collaboration with head gardener Richard Gardner on decisions regarding the design and operation of the building. 33 The Lord & Burnham Company, greenhouse manufacturers, provided the plans and materials. 34

Bowditch specified his needs for The Breakers in a letter to Lord & Burnham dated October 18, 1886, writing: “In regard to the Vanderbilt greenhouse, will you please go on at once with plan No. 2, for the Palm House, Connecting House, and two pits, with glass vestibule for Palm House etc. Iron frame and sills throughout, and

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34 The Lord & Burnham Co., established in 1866 as Lord’s Horticultural Manufacturing Company, was one of the country’s most prominent greenhouse builders and manufacturers. The company was notable for developing efficient heating systems and pioneering the use of ground glass and other innovative construction materials used in the industry. The records of the Lord & Burnham Co. are archived at the Mertz Library, New York Botanical Garden, New York, New York.
In subsequent correspondence, the “pits” were referred to as “storage pits” covered with a roof. Correspondence on the greenhouse improvements also referenced the construction of a “potting house” or “potting shed,” and indicated that the greenhouses were heated. (There are references in the correspondence between Bowditch and Lord & Burnham to “old” boilers and greenhouses. These were presumably the structures constructed by Lorillard, date unknown. Bowditch wrote: “What I want to have done is to have your pipes put into the palm-house in their final arrangement, but connect them with the old boiler as it stands, for a temporary arrangement. The old boiler will do this work, for we will relieve it of the old palm house and also of one of the old general greenhouses.”

Bowditch also instructed that the new greenhouses were to be painted “very Dark Brown, same as stables and outhouses on the place.” By the spring of 1887, under the supervision of Bowditch and Gardner, the greenhouse renovations were complete. The resulting conservatory complex featured an inverted E-shape plan. (See Figure 11.) The potting house and fern house were located in the connecting structure from which extended the two plant houses and the palm house in the center. Between the palm house and the plant houses were two storage pits.

Figure 11: Sketch of Vanderbilt’s greenhouse complex at The Breakers accompanying correspondence dated March 8, 1889. [Image courtesy The Preservation Society of Newport County.]

[To date, a landscape plan, plant list, or other design documents related to Bowditch’s landscape work for Vanderbilt during this period have not been located. Historic correspondence from to this period focuses on the greenhouses. Bowditch’s personal papers provide little insight into the thoughts or theories influencing his work at The Breakers at this time. Although a small set of historic photographs offers a record of the landscape during this period, the images focus on documenting the Peabody & Stearns villa rather than site features and plant materials. Contemporary historic atlases provide some information related to the location of buildings, streets, and circulation features.]

In addition to the renovation and expansion of the conservatory complex and the construction of the children’s cottage, the most significant known changes to the landscape during this period relate to the site’s circulation system. (See Figure 12.) With Vanderbilt’s occupancy of The Breakers, existing paths were modified and additional paths were created in the landscape to provide access to the greenhouses in the far northwest corner of the property and the new children’s cottage. During this period, a section of the northern path was
reconfigured to loop north past the children’s cottage to the perimeter of the site where it turned east toward the ocean and its junction with the Cliff Walk. (This alignment of the northern path marks the first evidence of the configuration of the northern section of the serpentine walk as it existed during the period of significance.) The southern path was also altered with the removal of the section of the path that led to the house’s south façade. See Figures 12 and 14.)

Figure 12: Detail from “Atlas of the City of Newport, Rhode Island,” Massachusetts: L. J. Richards & Co., 1893. Note the location of the main house and (following clockwise) the caretaker’s cottage, the stables, the greenhouses, and the children’s cottage. A curvilinear network of drives and footpaths crossed the grounds. Paths along the perimeter of the property connected with the Cliff Walk, leaving the turf lawn south and east of the house uninterrupted. [Image courtesy the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.]

39 Although this Newport atlas is dated 1893, it reflects conditions during the period of the landscape development before the fire that required rebuilding the mansion and redevelopment of the grounds.
During this period, a combination of arboreal and garden planting characterized the landscape. The expansive turf lawn south and east of the house remained a significant design element. It is evident from historic photographs, however, that with Vanderbilt’s occupancy some changes were made to the plant materials. One section of the otherwise open lawn east of the house featured a deciduous tree massing with shrubs and planted beds. (Historic photographs do not indicate if this feature was in place during Lorillard’s period of occupancy.) Southwest of the house the groupings of low shrubs, evergreens, and patterned beds from the Lorillard period were removed and replaced with a more simplified planting scheme of decorative shrubs. (See Figure 14.) Also during this period, the vegetation north of the house was modified to accommodate the children’s cottage, which faced an open lawn that extended toward the ocean. (See Figures 8-9.) Plant materials along the exposed eastern perimeter were relatively scarce.

Figure 13: The Breakers, looking west, no date. Note the north service wing addition (on right in photo), by Peabody & Stearns, added to the house during this period. [Photo courtesy the Newport Historical Society.]
Although a contemporary account describing Vanderbilt’s changes to the property notes that “a large main sewer, with tributaries from the lodge, stables, and villas” was laid, a site plan from this period has not been identified to date.\textsuperscript{40} As yet, the only known Bowditch plan for The Breakers is a site plan showing sewer and water systems dated 1895 (see below). It is unknown whether this 1895 plan utilized parts of an infrastructure already in place or if it was built entirely new.

A description of the Vanderbilt’s cottage, published in 1886 in the second volume of \textit{Artistic Country-Seats: Types of recent American villa and cottage architecture with instances of country clubhouses}, provides additional insight into the character and features of the landscape design. The description reads:

\begin{quote}
The situation is one of the noblest, from an ideal seaside point of view, that this country can show, the grounds comprising many acres on the ocean-shore, which here rises abruptly ten or twelve feet above the surface of the water.

A pretty foot-path winding along the bluff, near its edge, is practically a public highway, although itself on the borders of these several private estates, and apparently a part of them.
\end{quote}

Mr. Vanderbilt’s house stands at some distance from the road, in the midst of shrubbery and noble trees that were planted many years ago, and the landscape-gardening is of a choice order, although the lay of the ground does not present many undulations; but the artist who created the lawn, with its various embellishments, and a knowledge of the science of his business, and would have appreciated the emotions of the late Andrew J. Downing, who said: ‘I love most of the soft turf, which, beneath the flickering shadows of scattered trees, is thrown like a smooth natural carpet over the swelling outline of the smiling earth. Grass, not grown into tall meadows or wild bog tussocks, but softened and refined by the frequent touches of the patient mower, till at last it becomes a perfect wonder of tufted freshness and verdure. In short, the ideal of grass is a lawn...with such a lawn, and large and massive trees, one has indeed the most enduring sources of beauty in a country residence...what more does a reasonable man desire of the beautiful about him in the country? Must we add flowers, exotic plants, fruits? Perhaps so; but they are all, in an ornamental light, secondary to trees and grass, where these can be had in perfection.’

This account, describing “shrubbery and noble trees that were planted many years ago,” suggests that Vanderbilt may have retained many plant materials already in place from Bowditch’s landscape design for Lorillard.

In 1888, two articles on Newport penned by writer, historian, and critic M. G. Van Rensselaer were published in Garden and Forest, a highly influential nineteenth-century American journal devoted to horticulture, botany, landscape design, and forestry. An excerpt from the first article, focusing on the homes along the Cliff Walk, reads:

The best part of Newport is the beautiful Cliff Walk, which runs for more than three miles on the edge of the lifted rocky shore, passing villa after villa set back beyond verdant lawns. An old public right of way has most fortunately kept this walk open and free, although the land all belongs to the villa-owners; and the appearance of brotherly concord between neighbor and neighbor and generosity toward the public, which it seems to reveal, added to its intrinsic charms, has made it a frequent theme for praise with foreign writers on landscape gardening and the arrangement of country towns. Here, at least, no sins of carelessness appear. The soil along the cliffs is, by nature, thin and poor, so it requires an immense amount of care and money to make and keep these lawns, although the damp climate favors the work.

Van Rensselaer went on in her piece to criticize the combination of formal and picturesque elements found in many of Newport’s estate gardens. An excerpt reads:

The fierce sweep of the sea winds in winter is, of course, injurious to the growth of trees in such exposed situations as those along the Cliff Walk; but shrubs and flowers can be made to grow with great luxuriance. The lapse of five or six years has surrounded many of the newer houses with rich thickets of tall shrubs and even with trees of considerable size; and year by year veritable carpets, in the shape of formal beds of bright flowers and foliage-plants, are spread out around them. These beds deserve admiration from the merely cultural point of view – nothing could be better, as far as luxuriance and neatness are concerned. Bold effectiveness, rather than beauty, seems, as a rule, to have been sought for alike in their composition and in their disposition. As a rule, their colors are crude and inharmonious, and they are multiplied out of all reason and placed where they do the greatest possible

41 Artistic country-seats; types of recent American villa and cottage architecture; with instances of country clubhouses (New York: Appleton and Company, 1886): 143-146. Harry Eudenbach notes in his book Estate Gardeners of Newport that the reputation of Newport’s grass was established during the Colonial period when “good English grass seed” was imported and grown by colonists to provide proper grazing land for their stock. See Eudenbach, Estate Gardeners of Newport, 12.
harm to the effect of the grounds as a whole. The fact is doubly to be regretted, for Newport is the very place where formal bedding might often be used to the best advantage. Nowhere do we see so many houses of the most formal and dignified character standing close to a road or even a street, and surrounded by very small grounds. In such cases, a formal disposition of the grounds might well suggest itself as the most appropriate. But to be good in effect the scheme should be consistent. Formality should reign and rule, not merely occur in certain features. But, instead of straight-lined roads and paths and regular arrangements of shrubberies, clipped hedges and formally shaped trees, with which pattern-beds and borders would be in true accord, informal schemes are seen where landscape effects are simulated in miniature – where winding drives and paths are flanked by “natural” groups of trees and shrubs and tall flowering plants – sadly interfered with, often, indeed, wholly ruined, by a profusion of flat beds and borders, rigid in outline and gaudy in color.  

In her second article on Newport, Van Rensselaer praised Olmsted’s design for Frederick W. Vanderbilt’s Rough Point (completed in 1890) writing:

I am told that the owners are considering whether it will not be well to adopt a scheme for treating their grounds which will be an entire novelty in this part of Newport. This scheme would confine the lawns and garden shrubberies to the entrance side of the house, and treat the entire seaward slope in the most natural possible way. This portion is largely composed of visible rocks in varied shapes of the most interesting and picturesque character, and it certainly seems as though to plant it with low native shrubs and creepers and wild flowers, simulating, as far as possible, a spot which has not been planted at all, would be the best device.

A more descriptive, less critical account of Newport’s gardens was published in 1891 by Lucius D. Davis, editor of the journal Gardens and Gardening and one time proprietor of the Newport Daily News, in a four-part series for The American Garden. (Davis was also the author of the book Ornamental Shrubs, published in 1899.) In the first article of the series Davis wrote:

The old town is quaint and perhaps dull, but rich in historic treasures and local traditions; the new is a grouping of cottages and villas, substantial, costly and ornate; and for nothing is it more admired than for its trees, its shrubs and its flowers.

…the climate is soft and the atmosphere humid, affording, in this respect, conditions most favorable to the perfection of lawns and the growth of vegetation in general. Many of the estates include several acres, divided between the closely shaven grass, the beds of flowers and the borders of shrubbery and trees.

On the ocean frontage are the famous Newport cliffs, which extend from the bathing beach, in a southerly direction, nearly two miles, to a point where the shore line turns sharply and extends westerly. These cliffs are rocky and abrupt…the chief pleasure drive, runs nearly parallel with the cliffs, and a part of the distance but a few hundred feet therefrom; and in this space are located many of the finest and most extensive villas in the city. It was once supposed that trees and shrubs could not be successfully grown in such an exposed locality, but the contrary is now fully demonstrated, as the finest gardens in Newport, with all their wealth or native and exotic plants, are to be found in such high and exposed situations.

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The old topiary methods are wholly avoided, and in passing through many of these grounds the visitor is more impressed with thoughts of the forest than of beds of flowers. It would not be just to say that the methods are not artificial, for such gardening would be impossible. But the art and skill employed have been put to their best in copying nature in her multiform variations, and combining in small space the fruitage of the rough hillsides and the rich valleys in their best conditions.\textsuperscript{44}

In the second part of his Newport series, Davis described Vinland, the Catharine Lorillard Wolfe estate adjacent to The Breakers, and the work there by Ernest W. Bowditch’s brother James H. Bowditch:

In the autumn of 1881, Miss Catharine L. Wolf...purchased a lot of land consisting of about ten acres, location on what is known as Ochre Point...as a site for a summer home...It had long been understood that the situation as so swept by ocean winds that trees could not be grown there at all...But as will be seen, even such adverse conditions have been successfully met, and there are now few gardens in America, if any, possessed of superior attractions.

This favorable outcome of Miss Wolf’s purpose is largely due to the skill and perseverance of James H. Bowditch, the landscape artist, who, if he had done no other work in this line, would be entitled to high rank in his profession. It was certainly a bold experiment, when he decided to introduce, on a large scale, the rich and rare evergreens of this and other countries in so great abundance as to give them prominence over all others. It was determined from the first to place reliance chiefly upon hardy trees and shrubs, and especially on the so-called foliage plants for the desired effects. Mr. Bowditch had made use of some of these on the adjoining estate, now owned by Cornelius Vanderbilt, of which I may write hereafter, and had been successful where many others had prophesied failure. He now proceeded to greatly enlarge the list, especially of foreign varieties, and in doing so, has tested their capabilities and adaptations to the fullest extent. The result is, therefore, of especial value to horticulturalists as affording assistance in determining the hardiness of the several species, some of which are not popularly supposed to be adapted to the New England and other northern climates.\textsuperscript{45}

In the 1892 book \textit{A Few Flowers Worthy of General Culture}, two Bowditch landscapes in Newport – Vinland and The Breakers – were described:

Individual gardens there may be...finer than anything at Newport, but, taken as a whole, there is no place whose gardening is at all comparable with that of our fairest summer city by the sea. Many things contribute to this. The formation and natural scenery of the island, which are most fortunate, have furnished a site for a suburban city that is fairly an expression of our greatest wealth and best taste. The landscape gardener has been recognized as the peer of the architect, and they have worked harmoniously together to produce an effect of complete beauty not to be obtained by those who employ the best talent to design their houses and leave their grounds and gardens to be arranged and planted by men who would hardly rank in ability and intelligence with the average carpenter and mason.

The house built for Miss Catharine Wolfe is one of the very finest suburban residences in America...The planting of the grounds is very elaborate, and rare trees, shrubs and plants are used by the thousand, but all in masses, and the outlines so managed as to preserve large open sweeps of lawn and to give to the grounds, which are quite extensive, the appearance of being far more so.

Not far away is Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt’s place. The house is a fine old-fashioned one in the English country style, is also built on different levels and the lawn made to conform to them. A mass of shrubbery planted at one end of the house gives the needed relief from formality. The grounds have


\textsuperscript{45} Lucius D. Davis, “The Gardens of Newport – II,” \textit{The American Garden} 12, no. 7 (July 1891): 384-89.
been intelligently handled and make a pleasing landscape picture, the details of which are very fine... The effect of the vines (Tropaeolum) on the building we think very fine, and well illustrates that taste more than the rarity of the plants used contributes to the beauty of gardens.\textsuperscript{46}

In 1890, the Newport Horticultural Society was established by Newport gardeners Richard Gardner, John T. Allan, Alexander McLellan, and David Gordon and florist Arend Brandt.\textsuperscript{47} Members of the society had an important impact on Newport’s horticultural advancements. The group collaborated with each other to share their professional expertise, worked to disseminate their expert knowledge, and showcased their talents by hosting annual flower shows and horticultural competitions. A notice in an 1896 issue of Gardens and Gardening advertised plants available from the Newport Horticultural Society. It is unknown when the society opened the nursery, how long it was in operation, or if Gardner sourced any materials from the nursery for The Breakers.

In the winter of 1892, a fire broke out at The Breakers, destroying Vanderbilt’s cottage. The December 10, 1892, issue of Harper’s Weekly covered the event reporting: “The fire, it is thought, was caused by a defective flue, and shortly after its discovery the whole house was in a blaze. In a short time the house and its contents were totally destroyed, and little was left save bare and crumbling walls and chimneys.”\textsuperscript{48} (See Figure 15.) With unlimited resources at hand, Vanderbilt immediately set about rebuilding his estate, transforming the landscape and commissioning a mansion that would help define Newport’s Gilded Age opulence.

\textsuperscript{47} Eudenbach, Estate Gardeners of Newport, 37.
Figure 15: View of The Breakers after the fire, 1892. [Photo courtesy the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.]
LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS: 1885-1892

Natural Systems and Features
The steep coastal cliffs and flat promontory that characterized the site’s geomorphology during this period were the product of the natural processes that formed the island’s shoreline and oceanfront bluffs. As described for the period 1877-1885, this natural morphology was a significant factor in the site’s ongoing residential use during this period.

Spatial Organization
As with the period 1877-1885, the site’s spatial organization during this time served to create a distinct physical and visual separation between the main house and the service areas. On the ground plane, the space was defined by the rectilinear grid of the municipal perimeter roads and the naturalistic course of the Cliff Walk. The ground plane was further articulated by the oval entrance drive, social/recreational footpaths, and functional paths/access drives. Topographically, the site featured an artificial high point in the approximate center of the property on which the house was located. On the vertical plane, the site’s spatial organization was defined primarily by the massing of the house, which rose in the center of the site above the tree canopy, as well as by the steep drop-off along the cliff face. Clusters of trees also articulated the vertical plane and, in the area north of the house, provided a visual transition from the house to the ground plane. Other vertical elements, including the caretaker’s cottage, stables, and greenhouses were clustered and set back along the perimeter of the site to maintain the visual prominence of the house. During this period, the children’s cottage was added to the site, further articulating the vertical plane. Overhead planes continued to be defined by views and vistas. These included the principal 360-degree view from the house’s prominent octagonal tower, views to the house from points along the entrance drive and from the social/recreational footpaths, and periodic views of the house from the Cliff Walk.

Land Use
Although specifics are unknown, during this period the site continued to be used primarily as a seasonal residence, accommodating all of its associated social and recreational uses. The land also supported maintenance and back-of-the-house activities taking place in service and support buildings. Horses were housed in the stables. Greenhouses were used to propagate and winterize plants. The caretaker’s cottage provided housing for support staff who may have maintained residency throughout the year, rather than seasonally.
Cultural Traditions
The development of the landscape during this period continued to be influenced by Newport’s Gilded Age patterns of residential growth and construction. As such, the design and implementation of the landscape was not restrained by financial limitations, and Vanderbilt worked with prominent designers on improvements to the estate, including landscape architect Ernest W. Bowditch and architects Peabody & Stearns. The development of the landscape during this period was also influenced by Newport’s function as a summer colony. As such, the landscape was designed primarily for seasonal use, and the house and likely some plantings were winterized when the property was not occupied. During this period, the development of the landscape was also influenced the property’s head gardener, whose cultural traditions and horticultural practices shaped the land use.

Cluster Arrangement
The arrangement of structures in the landscape during this period continued to reflect the residential character of the grounds. The house was given primacy in the center of the site and faced southeast. Outbuildings, including the caretaker’s cottage, stables, and the greenhouses were clustered on the western edge of the grounds in the northwest quadrant of the site. While the children’s cottage was located north of the house within a distinctive setting to differentiate it from the service outbuildings, it was still set back from the main house and did not interrupt the open expanse of the turf lawn.

Circulation
An 1893 atlas of Newport illustrates the circulation system at The Breakers during this period. Historic photographs provide additional detail. Municipal roads continued to define the boundaries of the property on three sides. These perimeter roads included Shepard Avenue on the north, Ochre Point Avenue on the west, and Ruggles Avenue on the south. Ochre Point Avenue was improved with a 6-inch water pipe and two fire hydrants. Shepard Avenue was partially laid out, with the eastern half consisting of a gently undulating path that terminated in a circular oceanfront overlook. The Cliff Walk followed the general contour of the shoreline along the eastern edge of the site. The Cliff Walk extended north and south of the property lines to form a continuous path through adjacent estates.

The site’s internal circulation system linked all aspects of the landscape design. The drives and paths were curvilinear and naturalistic in character and, based on historic photographs, carefully manicured. The principal circulation feature was the oval entrance drive, located west of the house. Upon entering the grounds from Ochre Point Avenue, the entrance drive passed the caretaker’s cottage, turned slightly south, turned north to the house’s entrance porch, and then looped around past the stables to form an oval. To accommodate horses and carriages, the entrance drive was greater in width than the secondary paths.
Secondary circulation features included a series of social/recreational footpaths as well as functional paths/access drives. During this period, additional paths were created in the landscape to provide access to the greenhouses, which were located at the far northwest corner of the property, and to the children’s cottage. First, the northern path was altered from its original configuration to accommodate the children’s cottage. Its starting point along Shepard Avenue (where there was presumably a gate to the street) remained the same, as did the initial section leading south into the site and the branch that looped around to the front of the house. The section of the path that led east to the Cliff Walk through the lawn was reconfigured to loop north past the children’s cottage to the perimeter of the site where it turned east toward the ocean and its junction with the Cliff Walk. (As noted above, this alignment of the northern path marks the first evidence of the configuration of the northern section of The Breakers’ serpentine walk as it existed during the period of significance.) Second, the southern path was reconfigured. The section of the path that led to the house's south façade was removed. Instead, the southern path started at its intersection with the oval entrance drive. From there it briefly led west toward Ochre Point Avenue, turned south to follow the western perimeter of the property, and finally curved east along the southern perimeter until it converged with the Cliff Walk. Third, parts of the C-shaped path were realigned. The primary parts of the path – including the section that led from the house's north façade and the section that crossed the lawn created by the oval drive – were retained, while other sections were lost or realigned. Lastly, during this period, an intricate network of functional paths was created in the northwest corner of the site to connect the existing paths with the greenhouses and provide additional access to the stables and to Shepard Avenue. Other circulation features from the period of Lorillard’s occupancy, such as the oval entrance drive, remained unchanged.

The paving material from this period is unknown, but appears in historic photographs to be compact earth or gravel. Historic photographs indicate that there was no curbing along the drives or edging along the footpaths.

**Topography**

While the overall site featured a relatively flat topography characteristic of Ochre Point’s natural terrain, the house was placed on a slight mound, created during the previous period when the land was regraded prior to the construction of the villa. It is unknown during this period if there was a change in elevation (natural or manmade) between the lawn and the Cliff Walk. Topographical features also include the irregular, steep drop-off along the cliffs to the ocean.

**Vegetation**

(The character of the vegetation during this period is based on a limited number of historic photographs that primarily focus on the house. A limited number of written descriptions of the landscape have been identified to date.)
The landscape consisted of a combination of arboreal and garden planting. South and east of the house was a smooth, verdant turf lawn. One section of the otherwise open lawn east of the house featured a group of shrubs and deciduous trees encircled by a planted bed. (See Figure 13.) This feature may have been planted to help focus and frame views to and from the house or to provide a wind break. (Historic photographs do not indicate if this feature was in place during the period of Lorillard’s occupancy.) Southwest of the house, the groupings of low shrubs, conifers, and patterned beds from the Lorillard period were removed and replaced with a more simplified planting scheme of small trees, ornamental shrubs, and flower beds. (See Figure 14.) Several historic photographs illustrate the landscape treatment around the children’s cottage, which faced an open lawn that extended toward the ocean. (See Figures 8-10.) The lawn immediately surrounding the cottage was planted with small trees, shrubs, and planted beds. Set back from the rear façade were shrubs and tall flowering plants. Ivy, supported on wire mesh, was trained to grow up the base of the structure. During this period, ivy partially covered the house, perhaps as a means to integrate the house with the landscape. A description of the ivy written in 1892 describes it as *Tropaeolum*.\(^49\) With the exception of the children’s cottage, the character of the vegetation surrounding the support buildings is largely unknown. The landscape character of the oval entrance drive during this period is largely unknown, as is the treatment of vegetation along the perimeter of the site (see below).

Several undated historic photographs illustrate the character of the grounds near the caretaker’s cottage and around the oval entrance drive. (See Figures 16-17.) To date, these photographs have not been identified as belonging to the Lorillard period or the Vanderbilt period. They are included here as evidence of Bowditch’s landscape design prior to the construction of the Hunt palazzo.

\(^{49}\) *A Few Flowers Worthy of General Culture*, 15-20.
Figure 16: The Breakers, looking northwest, no date. At some point between 1877 and 1892, the western end of the oval entrance drive nearest to the Ochre Point Avenue entrance was planted with a dense thicket of deciduous and evergreen trees with an understory of shrubs and flower beds. The vegetation formed a nearly impenetrable wall along either side of the footpath that ran across this end of the oval. [Photo courtesy The Preservation Society of Newport County.]
Figure 17: Entrance to The Breakers from Ochre Point Avenue, no date. At some point between 1877 and 1892, perimeter plantings near the Ochre Point Avenue entrance included a mixture of flower beds with a backdrop of deciduous and evergreen trees. The trees appear relatively young, as the caretaker’s cottage and house are visible from the street. A low perimeter fence, partially covered with ivy, surrounded this end of the property. The top of the fence posts featured ornamental urns for potted plants. [Photo courtesy the Redwood Library.]

Buildings and Structures
Buildings and structures from this period include the renovated Peabody & Stearns house (1877-78) with the circa 1886 Peabody & Stearns addition, the caretaker’s cottage (1877-78), the stables (1877-78), and the children’s cottage (1886). Additionally, the site featured a sizeable Lord & Burnham greenhouse complex (renovated and expanded circa 1886-87).

Views and Vistas
During this period, the landscape was characterized by uninterrupted, panoramic views generally east and southeast from the house to the ocean; panoramic 360-degree views from house’s octagonal tower; views of the ocean from the children’s cottage; views from the Cliff Walk to the ocean; periodic views along the Cliff Walk to
the house and to the children’s cottage; views approaching the house from the oval entrance drive; and views from the social/recreational footpaths to the house and the ocean.

**Constructed Water Features**
During this period, there were no known constructed water features on the site.

**Small-Scale Features**
During this period, known small-scale features included drainage grates and a perimeter fence and gates.

**Archaeological Sites**
It is unknown what archaeological sites may have existed on the site during this period.
VANDERBILT OCCUPANCY OF THE RICHARD MORRIS HUNT PALAZZO, 1893-1938

1.4.1: Design, Construction, and Early Development, 1893-1899

To rebuild The Breakers, Vanderbilt selected preeminent American architect Richard Morris Hunt (1827-1895). Hunt was a logical choice for the Newport commission. He was the first American to study at the prestigious École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and, by 1893, enjoyed an established reputation as one of the most celebrated architects of his day. Additionally, Hunt’s work was known and admired by Vanderbilt and his family. By January 1893 – the month following the fire that destroyed the Peabody & Stearns villa – Hunt submitted two watercolor renderings to Vanderbilt for consideration in rebuilding The Breakers. The alternatives depicted a French Renaissance-style château and an Italian Renaissance palazzo. Vanderbilt preferred the palazzo scheme, which featured open loggias and broad terraces that blended interior and exterior spaces and integrated garden elements with architectural features. The terraces also functioned as viewing platforms for enjoying the grounds and oceanfront setting. Construction began in the spring of 1893 and was completed in two years, opening for the 1895 summer season.

During the construction of Hunt’s palazzo, it is likely that certain plant materials from earlier periods in the landscape development were cleared or destroyed as parts of the site were used as construction and staging areas. The grounds also served as the site for temporary sheds used by laborers and for the storage of building materials during construction. (See Figures 18-19.)

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50 Hunt had “designed (or was in the process of designing) at least four other houses for Cornelius II’s brothers.” See Van Slyck, “The Spatial Practices of Privilege,” 212. This included the Marble House, in Newport, built between 1888 and 1892.

51 Perschler, “Historic Landscapes Project, The Breakers, Book One,” prepared for The Preservation Society of Newport County, 1993. In 1926, Richard Morris Hunt’s sons donated their father’s records – including his books, drawings, sketchbooks, and photographs – to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) to archive. In 2011, the AIA’s Hunt collection was transferred to the Library of Congress. The collection includes renderings of the proposed alternatives for The Breakers, photographs, and sketches of various alternative designs for the perimeter fence and gates, among other items. See Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs, AIA/AAF Collection, Call Number Unprocessed in PR 13 CN 2010:100.
Figure 18: The Breakers, looking east, ca. 1894. During the construction of The Breakers, temporary structures stood in the northwest quadrant of the site. \(^5\) [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]

\(^5\) In addition to the construction photographs featured in Figures 18 and 19, the archives of The Preservation Society of Newport County includes an album of construction photos. See The Preservation Society of Newport County, The Breakers Collection, Series II, Box 4.
The construction of Hunt’s palazzo required a substantial redesign of The Breakers’ landscape, despite the fact that by siting the new building on the footprint of the prior villa, Hunt ensured the preservation of many specimen trees on the property. To re-envision the grounds, Vanderbilt turned once again to landscape architect Ernest W. Bowditch, who by this time had been working with The Breakers for over fifteen years and had a thorough understanding of the complexities of the site. Although Hunt is credited with designing several architectural features that became integral components of the landscape design, including the terraces, forecourt elements, and the perimeter fence and gates, the precise nature of the collaboration between architect and landscape designer is largely unknown. Bowditch devoted few lines in his memoirs to the project and alluded...
only briefly to Hunt’s design, writing: “The Lorillard estate changed hands, being purchased by Cornelius Vanderbilt, and the house burned and was replaced by a stone mansion – too large for the lot and too large for a private house anywhere, and I remodeled the grounds.”54 Similarly, the professional arrangement between Ernest W. Bowditch and his brother James H. Bowditch, a forester and nurseryman, is also largely unknown. Correspondence in the archival collection of The Preservation Society of Newport County between James Bowditch and Cornelius Vanderbilt suggests that James was involved with procuring plant materials, including flora for the parterre beds, shrubs for the rose garden, and pin oaks for the allées along the entrance drive.55 In landscaping the estate during this period, both Bowditch brothers would also logically have collaborated closely with Vanderbilt’s head gardener at the time, Richard Gardner.

To rebuild The Breakers, the grounds of the estate were cleared of all existing outbuildings with the exception of the children’s cottage. The Peabody & Stearns caretaker’s cottage was demolished, and a new caretaker’s cottage was built on approximately the same site as the previous structure near the Ochre Point Avenue entrance to the estate. Designed by Hunt to complement the architecture of the main house, the new caretaker’s cottage was a two-story, limestone structure. It was completed in 1895. An underground heating plant, which connected to the main house by a large tunnel, was located just north of the caretaker’s cottage. The Peabody & Stearns stables were also demolished. A new carriage house and stables, also designed by Hunt and completed in 1895, were constructed at the intersection of Bateman and Coggeshall avenues, a few blocks away from The Breakers. The Lord & Burnham greenhouses were dismantled and reassembled on a site adjacent to the stables in 1896.

By the summer of 1895, nearly all elements of Hunt’s architectural and landscape design and Bowditch’s site work at The Breakers were complete. The house and caretaker’s cottage were finished, as well as the north drive, west entry drive, forecourt composition, and terraces, which were planted with parterre beds and a rose garden. The grounds featured a new sewer and water supply system, and the serpentine walk – a key feature of Bowditch’s landscape design – was laid out (see text below). Several key site features, however, had yet to be completed when the Vanderbilts occupied the cottage in 1895. For example, the perimeter fence and gates had not been built. Also, plant materials most likely included a combination of old vegetation still in place from the previous period and new, perhaps temporary, materials quickly planted to prepare what had recently been a construction site for Vanderbilt occupancy. Despite this, Cornelius and his family spent the summer of 1895 at

South Terrace. For clarity, this document follows contemporary usage and refers to the terraces as the North Terrace and South Terrace. The term East Terrace is used in this document to refer to the stone terrace on the east side of the house that accesses the east lawn and faces the ocean.


55 See Preservation Society of Newport County Archives, The Breakers Collection, File: Landscape, Folder: Breakers Grounds (Bowditch).
The Breakers and over the season hosted several social events, offering Newport society a glimpse of Hunt’s newly constructed palazzo.\textsuperscript{56}

Several important primary source materials document the character of the landscape in the early years of this period. The first is an 1895 site plan of The Breakers drawn by Ernest W. Bowditch titled, “The Breakers owned by C. Vanderbilt Esq., Newport, R.I., System of Pipes for Fresh and Salt Water Supply, Sewers and Drains.”\textsuperscript{57} (See Figure 20.) As described by its title, the plan identifies the location and character of sewer and water supply lines, the type and location of drainage features, and the location and footprint of the underground heating plant and associated tunnel. In addition to providing valuable details regarding the site’s water supply and sewer systems, the plan provides key information on the primary circulation features of Bowditch’s landscape design. Most significantly, it illustrates the course of the serpentine walk – the primary social/recreational path during this period and a key feature of Bowditch’s plan for the site. The serpentine walk featured gentle curves that meandered through the grounds along three sides of the property and intersected with the Cliff Walk at two points on the north and south. Its layout was roughly symmetrical around the central axis of the house, which ran diagonally across the property from the northwest corner to the southeast corner. Spurs from the serpentine walk provided access to the caretaker’s cottage and the North Terrace. (As described in previous sections of the text, sections of the serpentine walk were laid out by Bowditch during earlier periods of the landscape development.) Other key circulation features identified on the 1895 Bowditch plan include the entrance drives and their flanking sidewalks, the service drive accessing the north service wing, the access path to the caretaker’s cottage, and the perimeter streets. The formal arrangement of the entrance drives, with their straight, symmetrical layout, and their careful integration into the architectural design of the entrance forecourt and porte-cochère suggest that Hunt, rather than Bowditch, may have been responsible for designing these elements of the circulation system.


A second important primary source document from this period is a letter from James H. Bowditch to Cornelius Vanderbilt dated February 25, 1895. The letter includes a cost estimate and list of materials for planting the South Terrace parterre beds and pergola and the North Terrace rose garden. As described in the letter, materials for the South Terrace included: 1,400 Alyssum Tom Thumb; 1,800 Alternanthera [aurea?] grana; 6,000 Alternanthera rosea grana; 700 Lobelia Blue Dwarf; 1,600 Hedera canariensis (for the sunken edge); 4 Ampelopsis muralis; 2 Aristolochia sypho [sic]; 2 Bignonia radicans; and 4 Clematis paniculata. The North Terrace rose garden featured: 40 Standard Roses; 80 Half Standard Roses; 100 Hybrid Perpetual Roses (or Manetti); 200 Tea Roses; and 410...
Wichuraian Roses (for the sunken edge). Although penned by James Bowditch, the inventory may have been developed in collaboration with head gardener, Richard Gardner, who would have had insight into the availability of stock and the suitability of plant varieties for the Newport climate. James Bowditch wrote: “The Roses (all but the Wichuraian) and Hedera are ordered from England. The bedding stock from New York. I might have sent this estimate a week ago, but I did not understand that you cared for it specifically, as it only includes the Rose Garden the Terrace design accepted in New York Feb. 14th; and the twelve vines for [South] Terrace Pillars.”

Although there is no known written description of the “Terrace design” referred to in James Bowditch’s letter, historic photographs of the South Terrace parterre beds illustrate a symmetrical pattern, resembling those often seen in formal gardens of Europe. The flower beds were set within sunken panels of grass, perhaps to protect them from the elements.

A series of images of the newly completed palazzo taken by photographer Frank H. Child in 1895 illustrates key elements of the early landscape and portraits the estate during the first summer of the Vanderbilt family’s occupancy. (See Figures 21-26.)


60 Part of the Richard Morris Hunt collection at the Library of Congress includes a series of photographs of The Breakers taken by photographer Frank H. Child in 1895 and reproduced in part here. The photographs were most likely commissioned by Hunt when The Breakers was completed. See Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs, AIA/AAF Collection, Call Number Unprocessed in PR 13 CN 2010:100.
Figure 21: The Breakers main entrance, looking east, 1895. The west entry drive off Ochre Point Avenue extended in a direct linear path from the street to the forecourt and porte-cochère on the west façade of the house. Two sidewalks flanked the drive, and the caretaker’s cottage was left of the entrance. A row of clipped shrubs on either side of the entrance formed a low screen between the street and the property. Trees just inside the perimeter of the property provided additional privacy. The size of the trees adjacent to the caretaker’s cottage suggests that they may date to an earlier landscape period. The narrow tree lawns between the west entry drive and its flanking sidewalks were articulated with evenly spaced evergreen trees as well as potted trees. (Photographic evidence indicates that, during the Vanderbilt family’s occupancy, the treatment of the vegetation within these tree lawns varied greatly.) A close examination of this image indicates that saplings have been planted to form an allée along the west entry drive. Note also that the perimeter fence and entrance gate had not yet been constructed and that the lamp posts flanking the forecourt had not been installed. [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]

61 This photograph gives evidence of an allée in place at The Breakers by 1895. Correspondence between James H. Bowditch and Vanderbilt regarding the acquisition of pin oaks for the allées along the entrance drives, however, is dated January 1896. This correspondence notes that, “The trees may be dug the latter part of March or early April probably, depending upon the weather.” (See Perschler, “Historic Landscape Project, The Breakers, Book One,” prepared for The Preservation Society of Newport County, 1993.) Research to date has not resolved the discrepancy between the documentation.
Figure 22: The Breakers, looking north across the forecourt, 1895. Note the young trees of the entrance allée. The formal allée contrasts with the curvilinear edge of the cluster of shrubs planted along the stone balustrade of the South Terrace. Note also the use of potted trees along the entrance drives and in the forecourt. While these potted trees may have been a temporary arrangement until more permanent plant materials could be acquired and installed, trees in tubs appear in later photographs of the mature landscape as well. (See Figures 44 and 46.) [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]
Figure 23: West façade of The Breakers, looking southeast, 1895. This view illustrates the turf lawn and arboreal plantings in the northwest quadrant of the property. This section of the grounds also featured planted beds, one of which contained trellises (in center of photo). The height and density of the stand of trees north of the house (on left in photo) may suggest that the trees were remnants from an earlier period in the landscape’s development. These trees and understory plantings may have served to screen views of the north service wing. [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]
Figure 24: The Breakers’ South Terrace, looking north, 1895. This view illustrates the formal character and classical pattern of the parterre gardens on the South Terrace and the use of pergolas to highlight architectural elements. (See text above regarding the type and quantity of the plant materials used on the South Terrace.) These classically inspired elements provided a transition between the formality of the house and the surrounding landscape. Note the small-scale landscape features including the terrace gates and benches. Note also the use of outdoor furniture within the loggia facing the ocean (on right in photo), evidence of the integration of exterior and interior spaces in Hunt’s design of The Breakers. [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]
Figure 25: The Breakers, looking southwest, 1895. This view illustrates the broad expanse of the turf lawn east of the house and the North Terrace, which featured a sunken rose garden and fountain. (See text above regarding the type and quantity of the plant materials used for the rose garden.) A row of trees planted along the far edge of the terrace (on right in photo) screened views of the north service wing from the lawn and Cliff Walk. At this time, there were no foundation plantings along the base of the terraces. Hoses (visible on the right and far left) were laid across the lawn for irrigation. Trees planted along the perimeter of the grounds (on left in photo) provided privacy from adjacent streets and neighboring estates. During this period in the landscape’s development, the perimeter trees were densely planted but relatively low, with nearby cottages visible over the tops of the trees along Ruggles Avenue. [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]
In 1896, an imposing twelve-foot-high stone and wrought-iron perimeter fence, designed by Richard Morris Hunt and fabricated by the William Jackson Company of New York, was installed. The fence enclosed three sides of the property, leaving the eastern edge along the Cliff Walk open. (See Figures 27-30.) The fence was composed of fifty-six iron work panels (each measuring thirty-one feet long by eight feet high) separated by limestone piers and set on a four-foot-high limestone wall. At the Ochre Point Avenue and Shepard Avenue entrances were two massive ornamental wrought-iron gates, also designed by Hunt. The nearly thirty-foot-high arched gates were supported by massive stone piers and featured elaborate scrollwork including the acorn and oak leaf family symbol surrounding the initials of Cornelius Vanderbilt. The entrance composition included two side gates, which gave access to the sidewalks flanking the entrance drives. The fence also featured ornamental iron gates at the north and south entrances to the Cliff Walk. Ornamental iron gates were also located at the north entrance to

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62 When the new perimeter fence at The Breakers was installed, it is likely that the former fence (shown in Figure 26) was removed and relocated to the carriage house and stables located at the intersection of Bateman and Coggeshall avenues. Email correspondence with John Tschirch, former Director of Museum Affairs, The Preservation Society of Newport County, September 2014.
the North Terrace and at the north entrance to the South Terrace.\(^6\) (Photographic documentation indicates that the gates to the terraces were in place by 1895. It is unknown if they were designed by Hunt.)

Figure 27: The Breakers, looking east, no date. This view, taken from Victoria Avenue, illustrates the perimeter fence and main entrance gate on Ochre Point Avenue designed by Hunt and installed in 1896. Note that at this time, the trees around the perimeter of the site were relatively low. [Photo courtesy the Newport Historical Society.]

Figure 28: Shepard Avenue entrance, looking north, no date. Note the use of catalpa trees as well as potted trees to articulate the tree lawn along the north drive. Note also that the sidewalks flanking the north drive have by this time been extended the entire length of the drive and passed through the gates. [Photo courtesy the Newport Historical Society.]
Figure 29: Ruggles Avenue, looking east, no date. This view of Ruggles Avenue illustrates the late nineteenth-century character of the street, which formed the southern boundary of the site. Note the street trees planted along the Ruggles Avenue sidewalk, the perimeter fence, which extended unbroken along the entire length of the property, and the trees within the fence line that provided privacy from neighbors and passersby. [Photo courtesy the Newport Historical Society.]
By 1896, the landscape was embellished with a variety of functional and aesthetic small-scale features. Four bronze lamp posts flanked the forecourt along the entrance drives. They were decorated with molded figures and executed by Henri Bonnard of New York. The standards were thirteen feet high and mounted on three-foot-tall limestone pedestals. The terraces were embellished with carved stone urns and enhanced with stone fountains and benches and a decorative sundial. One stone fountain was located on the northeast corner of the North Terrace. It measured six feet high and four and a half feet in diameter. A second fountain was located in the middle of the south edge of the South Terrace. It measured three and a half feet high and four feet in diameter. Stone benches were installed at various locations on the North and South Terraces, and wood and iron benches were located along the serpentine walk. The sundial, which featured a column embellished with a carved elephant, was located within a grass panel in the southeast corner of the South Terrace. (At an unknown date, it was relocated to an adjacent grass panel along the south edge of the South Terrace.) A Renaissance-style stone

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wellhead (date unknown), measuring three and a half feet high and three feet in diameter, was located along the southern section of the serpentine walk, south of the house. (It is unknown if this is its original location or if it was moved to this location at some unknown date.) A stone column (date unknown), measuring eight feet high and decorated with a spiral flute design, provided a focal element along the northern section of the serpentine walk in the northwest quadrant of the site. Its location along the serpentine walk aligned with the central axis of the house, which ran diagonally across the property. In nineteenth-century gardens, the use of landscape ornaments such as the column and wellhead served as “accents in the general layout” or as “focal points at the ends of long, ornately planted walks through garden beds.”\(^65\) Lastly, functional small-scale features included the skylights (no longer extant) located behind the caretaker’s cottage that provided light to the underground heating plant, the hatch door in the Ochre Point Avenue sidewalk accessing the coal chute, drainage grates, and bollards or guard stones.

Several contemporary accounts provide information on the landscape design and plant materials that characterized this period. In 1896, the *New York Times* published a description of Vanderbilt’s new greenhouse facilities after they had been relocated from The Breakers’ estate. The account describes the physical facilities as well as the variety and quality of species cultivated in Vanderbilt’s greenhouses at this time:

Cornelius Vanderbilt’s new greenhouses are attracting great attention from cottages and professional florists. The houses, which were constructed several weeks ago, are stocked with rare specimens, and among the many beautiful greenhouses connected with Newport’s magnificent Summer residences, easily take the lead. There is a potting house eighty feet long and twenty feet in width. There are also six houses of equal size, including a palm house stocked with a great variety of rare exotics. In one of the houses there is what is known as the Australian glory pea, a curious flower, which is very rare in this country – in fact, so hard to raise that few gardeners attempt to cultivate it. In another part of the same house is an abundance of begonias. Another house is filled with Gloxinias and maiden-hair fern, while another house in its entirety is given up to the cultivation of maiden-hair fern, of which Mrs. Vanderbilt is very fond. In another house are more begonias of every shade, and a most attractive bed of tuberoses and other flowers of color, bordered with fern and musk plant. Still another house is filled with a bed of fuchsias. Flowers for The Breakers, the Vanderbilt villa, are raised outside the greenhouses in the Summer and early Fall, but at this time of the year all flowers are being raised within doors. A great abundance of them is being produced daily, and later on, when the Vanderbilts shall have returned to New York, a large boxful will be cut each morning and sent to them to decorate their Fifth Avenue residence.\(^66\)

\(^{66}\) “The Vanderbilt Greenhouses,” *New York Times*, November 8, 1896. Later references to the Vanderbilt’s greenhouses provide additional information on the species of plants cultivated for The Breakers. An article from *American Gardening* remarks: “...a group of Nerines in variety as grown at Cornelius Vanderbilt’s Newport home, The Breakers, by R. Laurie, who remarks that he finds them most useful during the fall months when flowers are scarce. He has 22 named forms under cultivation, besides seedlings of his own raising.” See “A Group of Nerines,” *American Gardening* 19, no. 204 (November 19, 1898): 795. Nerines are a genus of flowering plants belonging to the Amaryllidaceae family that bear spherical clusters of lily-like flowers.
More significantly, in 1896, the journal *Gardens and Gardening*, published by Lucius D. Davis, featured a highly descriptive article on The Breakers with photographic illustrations of Vanderbilt's newly planted landscape. The article described the grounds and its distinguishing features, noting, however, that the landscape was still a work in progress:

> The dwelling is one of the most costly and magnificent private houses in America, if not in the world, and the grounds are laid out and planted to meet the demands of the situation. As might be expected, the landscape architect had an opportunity to do his best work, irrespective of financial limitations. As will be seen, these grounds are planted as a garden and not as a park, with numerous and fitting combinations of color, both of foliage and blossom...the house is situated near the center of the spacious grounds and faces eastward. Between it and the sea there is but little planting, except of low growing shrubs and flowers at the borders, the open space constituting one of the many beautiful lawns for which Newport is especially famed. Along the street lines there is a border of medium sized trees, which remain from a period before Mr. Vanderbilt's ownership and occupancy, and it is in front of these and under their protection that the recent planting has been done...The new planting of these villa grounds is not yet fully completed. There are still masses of the old remaining, where trees, shrubs and vines are crowding each other and awaiting the action of the master hand which shall give them more room.67

The *Gardens and Gardening* article represents an important record of the late nineteenth-century character of The Breakers’ landscape after its initial implementation following Bowditch’s design but before many of the vegetation features reached their maturity. Although an original copy of the journal has not been located to date, a photocopy is archived at the Redwood Library in Newport, Rhode Island. Despite the relatively poor quality of this copy, the full set of images accompanying the article is reproduced below.

The photographs of the serpentine walk in the *Gardens and Gardening* article illustrate the treatment of the path during this period, which demonstrates influences of the Picturesque, Beaux-Arts, and Victorian-era garden design. The serpentine walk was planted in a layered manner with a preliminary row of flowering annuals and herbaceous perennials backed by rows of evergreen shrubs and trees. The curvilinear path winding through a lawn of canopy trees denotes the picturesque style, while the geometric hedge structure is evidence of the Beaux-Arts influence. The Victorian language can be read in the low annual border plantings, and the colorful and exotic herbaceous massing. (See Figures 31-33.)

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Figure 31: This image from the *Gardens and Gardening* article illustrates the entrance to the northern section of the serpentine walk. The article reads: “This walk extends with graceful curves along the western boundary of the estate, and thence turning eastward parallels the northern line the entire distance to the sea, where it intersects the famous Newport cliff walk, which has been reserved through all the estates in this most beautiful locality. The bed of low plants shown is composed of a variety of evergreens such as are here much used for bedding purposes...It is sufficient to say that the walk, as thus indicated, is bordered with groups mostly of low growing varieties and massed with reference to size, form, and color to the best advantage. Following this initial bed come groups of Iris Kaempferii, purple leaved beeches but a few feet in height, golden elders, Spirea Thunbergii, and other sorts of well known hardy shrubs and herbaceous perennials, the annuals being but sparingly used and mostly in supplying temporary vacancies.”68 [Image from Lucius D. Davis, “The Breakers,” *Gardens and Gardening* 1, no. 7 (Newport, RI: 1896): 111-120.]

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68 Ibid.
Figure 32: This image illustrates the northern section of the serpentine walk, “as it sweeps around with the street corner in its course to the cliff.” The text reads: “Here the flowers shown are all herbaceous plants. First comes a long line of Achilea serrata plena...the taller plants in the rear are mostly specimens of Boltonia latisquama and B. asterioides which bloom later and keep up the succession. Behind these is a large bed of Paeonies... There are also in the rear large groups of sunflowers, especially Helianthus mollis, so that the entire season is well covered. It is a simple collection of well known plants, easily grown, and yet full of interest and never wearisome on the score of too much uniformity.”69 [Image from Lucius D. Davis, “The Breakers,” Gardens and Gardening 1, no. 7 (Newport, RI: 1896): 111-120.]

69 Ibid.
Figure 33: This image from the *Gardens and Gardening* article illustrates the northern section of the serpentine walk. “The slender plants on the left are fine specimens of Irish yew, Taxus baccata... These are four or five feet in height and well adapted to the situation as well as to each other. Then follow masses of Podocarpus, English holly, and a long line of retinosporas in their many species and varieties. The low plants are well rounded forms of *R. ericoides*, behind which is seen a collection of the plumosas, squarrosas, and others. The taller plants are largely fine specimens of *Biota elegantissima aurea*, *golden arborvitae*, juniper, yew and some of the more desirable varieties of the American arborvitae, such as the pyramidales, George Peabody and other sorts. These have all been grown in the special forms as desired... The large conifer shown is an interesting specimen of *Abies alcockiana*, Alcocks spruce, with its foliage bright green above and light blue beneath.”

(70) (Note: This image was reproduced in Davis’s 1896 article in *Gardens and Gardening* as well as in his later book *Ornamental Shrubs*, published in 1899. The image from *Ornamental Shrubs* is used here because it is a better quality reproduction.) [Image from Lucius D. Davis, *Ornamental Shrubs* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1899): iv, 95–98, 225–227.]

Ibid.
Figure 34: This photograph provides a close-up view of “an iron trellis extending along the drive from a side entrance.” (Despite this description, research to date has not identified the exact location of this trellis. However, it is similar in character to the trellis depicted in Figure 23.) The article states that the trellis was “built more especially for the support of vines and climbers, and is covered with a variety of showy plants, some blooming in early spring, others in midsummer and still others in autumn. And the foliage intermingled is as varied as the flowers...Several varieties had already been in bloom and disappeared, and now the Clematis paniculata has come to the front and hung out its tassels of white with a prodigality seldom surpassed...In front of this mass of flowers are planted some fine specimens of English hollies, six or eight feet high, with variegated foliage...There are other choice shrubs along the border, which help to make this street line especially interesting and beautiful.”71 [Image from Lucius D. Davis, “The Breakers,” Gardens and Gardening 1, no. 7 (Newport, RI: 1896): 111-120.]

71 Ibid.
Figure 35: This image from *Gardens and Gardening* illustrates the landscape treatment near the entrance to the northern section of the serpentine walk. The article describes this feature, “which with its companion piece on the other side presents so inviting an appearance that one is almost instinctively impelled to turn in and follow its windings, which terminate on the brow of the cliff. In this bed the group to which attention is especially invited is a collection of blue foliaged cedars, such as are here quite freely planted, but are seldom seen, if at all, elsewhere in Newport. Certainly no effort has been made to grow them in masses as they are grown at The Breakers, and for immediate effects in garden cultivation...There are very few known varieties of this cedar. The group shown in the illustration is one of these, and known as Atlantica glaanca.”72 [Image from Lucius D. Davis, “The Breakers,” *Gardens and Gardening* 1, no. 7 (Newport, RI: 1896): 111-120.]

72 Ibid.
Figure 36: This is a view of a section of the serpentine walk near the southern boundary of the estate. The *Gardens and Gardening* article described the feature as, “much the same in contour [as the northern path] but almost wholly different in its planting. It is more shady along its torturous course to the sea and more suggestive of repose, but by no means less interesting...Much of this walk is bordered with low growing flowers, mostly annuals or from the greenhouses. But it is understood that this is a temporary arrangement to be followed by hardy herbaceous plants, perennials, such are now everywhere coming into general use, and with good reason, for they are greatly to be preferred...In some places the pathway has been changed, leaving space to be filled for the time being, and during the intervening period plants are put in position which are to abide but for a single season.” This image illustrates, “a section of this low border planted with fibrous rooted begonias, B. semperflorens in variety and several colors, well arranged and superbly grown. Among them are seen a few foxgloves, campanulas, etc., mostly self sown. This bed or border contains more than three thousand of these begonias all from Mr. Vanderbilt’s own greenhouses. Such a large collection needs to be seen to be appreciated; it cannot be described.” [Image from Lucius D. Davis, “The Breakers,” *Gardens and Gardening* 1, no. 7 (Newport, RI: 1896): 111-120.]

73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
Figure 37: The specimen trees planted along the serpentine walk included, “a beautiful Abies orientale, as perfect and graceful in form as can be desired.”

[Image from Lucius D. Davis, “The Breakers,” *Gardens and Gardening* 1, no. 7 (Newport, RI: 1896): 111-120.]
Figure 38: This image illustrates, “a finely formed Nordmans spruce A. Nordmanniana. This is a very slow growing tree, native of the Crimean mountains, where it grows to great size and in immense forests. It is the most desirable of all the silver firs or spruces, but should be given a sheltered location, for best results.” [Image from Lucius D. Davis, “The Breakers,” Gardens and Gardening 1, no. 7 (Newport, RI: 1896): 111-120.]

76 Ibid.
Figure 39: This view illustrates a sunken bed of annuals on the South Terrace. The *Gardens and Gardening* article notes: “With its companion piece across the path at the left, it covers the space within the enclosure at the south of the spacious mansion. It the absence of the bright coloring a full idea of this bit of formal planting cannot well be formed. The plants are mostly alternantheras of several shades, the lighter colors being groups of sweet alyssum. It is a sunken bed with a border of English ivy covering the inclined banks.”

As designed by Bowditch with contributions by Hunt, the landscape of The Breakers during this period represented a combination of naturalistic and formal elements. Organically derived features such as the curvilinear serpentine walk and irregularly located specimen trees, which descended from the earlier picturesque estate, comingled with formal, stylized elements, including the terrace parterres, entrance allées, and classically inspired urns and fountains. Historian John R. Tschirch has identified The Breakers as “an important transition in American landscape design from the established nineteenth-century tradition of the picturesque park to the classical planning and historical models advocated by a generation inspired by the theories and practices of the École des Beaux-Arts.”

Thus, the Breakers is a layered landscape where the burgeoning classical revival style was imposed on the earlier picturesque tradition to create a distinctly Beaux Arts expression. Further, Victorian-era design influences, most notably in the lanting design of the serpentine walk, reflect the traditions and training of head gardener Richard Gardner who emigrated from England in 1881 and was likely knowledgeable in Victorian-era plants and garden design. Victorian influences on The Breakers’ planting may also have been the result of general horticultural trends in Newport throughout the Gilded Age.

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77 Ibid.
Contemporary journals provide insight into the features characteristic of Newport estate gardens during the late nineteenth century. In 1897, the Society of American Florists had their annual meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, with an outing arranged to Newport as part of the event. An article in *American Gardening* recounts the reaction of members to the city's horticultural display: “The marvelous grass on the lawns, which is a specialty to Newport, came in for liberal notice, as did the hedges and windbreaks of Rosa rugosa; the sight that these presented was to a great number of the visitors a revelation. Another novel feature to many was the innumerable and well-kept hedges of Californian and other Privet while here and there exclamation of surprise were to be heard when a postern gate or other prominence was passed, and it was noticed that superbly colored English Ivy was used as the covering.”

Contemporary accounts of the area also describe the frequent use of Rosa rugosa: “Newport is famous for its hedges and clumps of Rosa rugosa; here the rose is frequently used as a wind break, and is found to stand admirably the winds and gales of the sea.”

In 1899, Lucius D. Davis published the book *Ornamental Shrubs*, within which he described some of the plant varietals found in Newport gardens. Davis described Newport as “...America's great summer resort, which in its magnificent villa and cottage grounds is almost literally a city of gardens and flowers.” He commented on the cultivation of both native and exotic species, writing: "Here perhaps more than anywhere else in America are to be found in practical use the combined horticultural treasures of the world...These famous gardens derive their chief beauty and glory from what are known as hardy plants. In almost every instance the chief reliance for both flowers and foliage is upon shrubs and herbaceous perennials...Here are to be found the newer as well as the older hardy exotics from all parts of the world, where such have been grown alongside our native plants and their relative merits fully determined." Davis also commented on the use of Rosa rugosa, writing: “The bush is too strong a grower to be suitable for the ordinary rose garden, its proper place being on the lawn or in the border. In the gardens at Newport, Rosa rugosa is more freely planted than any other shrub, and particularly in exposed situations. It is seen in many villas on the highest cliffs, where it bravely withstands the fiercest winds that come in from open sea.”

Richard Gardner was employed as the head gardener at The Breakers until 1895, when he left to work at the Newport Nurseries where he specialized in roses and was credited with the development of several new species. (Gardner’s interest in the cultivation of roses may have influenced the decision to install a rose garden in the North Terrace during this period.) Gardner was succeeded as head gardener by Robert Laurie, who

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82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
previously served as the planting foreman under Ernest Bowditch.\(^7\) Research to date has not clarified the type and length of Laurie’s service.\(^8\) Following Laurie, the head gardener at The Breakers was Frederic Carter, who worked for the Vanderbilt family for several decades until 1931.\(^9\)

In 1899, Cornelius Vanderbilt II (b. 1843) died at the age of 56. His wife Alice inherited the property, spending summers at The Breakers until her death in 1934. The impact, if any, of Cornelius Vanderbilt’s death on the care and maintenance of the grounds at The Breakers is largely unknown, and research to date does not clarify what level of involvement Alice Vanderbilt assumed regarding the gardens and landscape following her husband’s death.

1.4.2: Vanderbilt Occupancy During the Early Twentieth Century, 1900-1938

The Breakers has been described as “the largest, most opulent house in a summer resort considered the social capital of America.”\(^8\) It is recognized today as a residence that defined the gilded era in American life that Vanderbilt and his peers helped to shape.\(^9\) The grounds and gardens of The Breakers were a showpiece that, among other functions, served as the backdrop and setting for parties and provided a refuge from the pressures and constraints of Newport society.\(^9\) Despite being a widow and known for her reserve, Alice Vanderbilt continued to host social events and gatherings at The Breakers following her husband’s death.

In 1907, the Washington Post reported on a party at The Breakers for Gladys Vanderbilt (1886-1965), the youngest of Alice Vanderbilt’s children: “It was made known today that the extensive festivities now being arranged at ‘The Breakers,’ the Newport home of Mrs. Alice G. Vanderbilt, next month, will be in conjunction with the distribution of one of America’s greatest fortunes. On the date of the festivity Miss Gladys Moore Vanderbilt attains her legal age, and under her father’s will come into absolute possession of the millions left in trust for her.”\(^9\) Shortly after her formal introduction to society, Gladys Vanderbilt married Hungarian nobleman, Count Laszlo Széchényi (1879-1938). In 1908, the New York Times described a busy social schedule at The Breakers: “The report that Mrs. [Alice] Vanderbilt is returning to Newport from Europe next month and will open The Breakers, is now accepted in the cottage colony as a fact, and that the Count and Countess [Gladys Vanderbilt] Széchényi are to come with Mrs. Vanderbilt is believed. The return of Mrs. Vanderbilt will mean a

\(^{85}\) “Local Briefs,” Newport Daily News, September 17, 1895.
\(^{87}\) Eudenbach, Estate Gardeners of Newport, 120.
\(^{89}\) Ibid.
\(^{91}\) “Richest Girl in America,” Washington Post, July 2, 1907.
round of large social affairs at The Breakers.”92 The same year, it was reported that Alice Vanderbilt was exploring ways to increase the family’s privacy at The Breakers: “Mrs. Vanderbilt, owner of The Breakers, hopes in the near future to obtain permission from the Board of Alderman to close Shepard and Ruggles Avenues, respectively to the north and south of her estate. Both thoroughfares are short streets but little used. If they are closed Mrs. Vanderbilt proposes to build a breakwater in front of the estate, lower the cliff walk, erect a high fence, and shut out the lower view of The Breakers from the cliff walk, as the excursionists who visit Newport in the Summer gather about the cliff walk close to the Vanderbilt place.”93 Despite her concerns for privacy, Alice Vanderbilt continued to entertain at The Breakers. A New York Times article from 1912 reported: “Mrs. Vanderbilt is planning a number of large affairs for the young people at The Breakers, which will mean the gathering again under its roof the pioneers of Newport. In addition to dinners and luncheon parties, Mrs. Vanderbilt is to give a ball Aug. 23.”94

Figure 40: Detail from “Atlas of the City of Newport,” Springfield, MA: L. J. Richards & Co., 1907. Note the relative size of the house and terraces and the circumferential route of the serpentine walk. [Image courtesy the Redwood Library.]

In the summer of 1914, The Breakers was photographed by noted photojournalist and garden photographer, Frances Benjamin Johnston (1867-1952). At the time, Johnston operated a studio in New York City with partner Mattie Edwards Hewitt (d. 1956) that specialized in architectural photographs of homes and gardens. The Frances Benjamin Johnston photographs are a valuable source of information on the landscape as it developed and matured through the first decade of the twentieth century. The images illustrate the well-tended and highly manicured character of the grounds at The Breakers as managed by Alice Vanderbilt and maintained by Frederic Carter, the family’s head gardener at the time, and his staff. (The eight images reproduced below include both black and white and hand-colored images of The Breakers from the Frances Benjamin Johnston collection at the Library of Congress.)
Figure 42: The Breakers entrance gate, looking east, 1914. This view of The Breakers captures the character of the Ochre Point Avenue entrance, as well as the gates, west entry drive, oak allée, and perimeter trees. Note the clipped catalpa trees within the tree lawn flanking the west entry drive. By this date, the pin oaks within the allée have matured, but their canopy was maintained so as not to block views of the house from the entrance. [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]
Figure 43: The Breakers, 1914. Garden ornamentation at The Breakers included a spiral-fluted stone column located within a hidden glade along the serpentine walk in the northwest corner of the site. Note the perfectly formed circular aperture in the lawn, the smooth earthen mound, and the carefully trained ivy. Surrounding plantings were set back from the column, framing the feature. [Hand-colored, glass lantern slide courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]
Figure 44: The Breakers, 1914. This view, looking east, of the northern perimeter of the grounds illustrates the Shepard Avenue gate and adjacent sections of the serpentine walk. The serpentine walk was flanked by layered borders of shrubs and herbaceous perennials similar to those described in the 1896 Gardens and Gardening article (see text above). The plants along the path were carefully massed with reference to size and form, with taller shrubs forming a screen along the perimeter fence. Note the potted trees that were used to embellish the tree lawns flanking the north drive. [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]
Figure 45: The Breakers, 1914. This view further illustrates the carefully maintained and highly formal character of the serpentine walk and its borders. Note that there was no edging along the serpentine walk, but the sidewalk flanking the north drive (in the foreground) featured stone curbing. A large specimen tree is visible in the background. [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]
Figure 46: The Breakers' South Terrace, 1914. Note the carefully trained vines around the pergola and the character of the sunken parterres. Clipped trees in tubs and low rounded shrubs further delineated the formal space. [Hand-colored, glass lantern slide courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]
Figure 47: The Breakers, 1914. This view of the front (east) façade of the children’s cottage illustrates the turf lawn and foundation plantings that defined the structure’s setting. [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]
Figure 48: The Breakers, 1914. This view, looking south, illustrates the approach to the rose garden on the North Terrace. The terrace was accessed through ornamental iron gates from a spur path of the serpentine walk. Note the hose running across the path and spigot (on right in photo). [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]
The Frances Benjamin Johnston photographs provide important information about the character of The Breakers’ landscape as maintained by Alice Vanderbilt and her team of gardeners during the early twentieth century. The images indicate a highly tended landscape that most likely required significant financial resources and a sizeable staff of groundskeepers. The photographs give evidence that, nearly two decades after its implementation, the landscape retained many key elements of Bowditch’s original design. This can be seen in the treatment of the serpentine walk and its borders as well as the character of the entrance drives. The images also illustrate what type of modifications had been made over the years. For example, ivy was planted around the foundations of the terraces and individual trees were planted in parts of the turf lawn. (See Figure 49.) Also, at
an unknown date, a lawn tennis court (no longer extant) was constructed at The Breakers. The court may have been built for Alice Vanderbilt’s daughter Gladys and her husband, Count Laszlo Széchényi, who were avid tennis players. Topographic evidence suggests that the court was located in the northwest quadrant of the site, near the north drive.

Ernest W. Bowditch (b. 1850) died in 1918; an obituary in *The American Architect* read: “Mr. Bowditch had been prominently identified with his art for many years, and was among that small but distinguished group of men who have by their efforts and ability elevated landscape architecture to its present high plane.” Over the course of his career, Bowditch’s practice included land surveying, sewer and water supply engineering, cemetery and park plans, subdivision layout, and residential design. Although his reputation is largely overshadowed today by the work of his contemporaries, notably Frederick Law Olmsted, Bowditch left an important legacy. Notable surviving examples of his work include Rockefeller Park and Shaker Lakes Park in Cleveland, Ohio, Tuxedo Park in New York, and Newton Terraces in Waban, Massachusetts, among others.

The grounds of The Breakers were featured in the March 1919 *Journal of the International Garden Club*, with photographs illustrating the serpentine walk and terraces. Within the same issue, the Vanderbilt family’s head gardener, Frederic Carter, contributed a description of one of the property’s specimen trees, a *Cedrus Atlantica Glauc*a, writing:

This beautiful Conifer deserves more recognition than it seems to get at present. Some erroneous ideas as to its hardihood, I believe, are partly responsible for its not being used in ornamental planting more than it is. It has stood 14 degrees below zero here in Rhode Island, which would lead one to assume it may be classed as a fairly hardy tree. Although that was a little severe, browning the foliage some, yet, in the Spring it broke out in its natural steel blue as beautiful as ever. Given a good open position this Cedar will make a handsome specimen well worth seeing any month in the year. It is of vigorous upright growth when well established, the branches are low and of a compact habit. It is apt to make a tap root, and should there be occasion to move it to another location, great care would have to be used in the operation, that is if the tree has grown to a fair sized specimen.

A decade later, Alice Vanderbilt’s Newport estate continued to attract the attention of both local and national admirers. In 1928, Alice hosted a tea at The Breakers for over a hundred Newport Garden Association members.

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93 The tennis court was taken out sometime before 1970. Interview with Bob Coyne, former caretaker at The Breakers, and Preservation Society of Newport County staff Bryan Coyne and Jeff Curtis, October 30, 2013.
and other guests.\textsuperscript{101} The same year, a \textit{New York Times} article remarked: “The grey pile of The Breakers, occupied by Mrs. Vanderbilt, is the dean of them all. It carries its past with dignity. Its emerald lawns billow down to the cliff walk, where they end in a fragrant ruffle of roses; the trees, nourished by the moist winds of many decades, are so heavily leaved that they begin to look as if there were part of a forest rather than of the garden of a Summer estate.”\textsuperscript{102}

During this period, the gardens and grounds at The Breakers were maintained under the supervision of two head gardeners – Frederic Carter and William “Billy” Murphy. As mentioned above, Carter became the head gardener at The Breakers in the late nineteenth century, not long after the original development of the landscape as designed by Bowditch. In 1931, Billy Murphy, who was initially hired as a greenhouse man at The Breakers in 1923, was promoted to head gardener. Murphy occupied the position of head gardener for 51 years, until 1982, continuing his association with the estate through its conveyance to The Preservation Society of Newport County (see text below).\textsuperscript{103} With a few exceptions, under the stewardship of Carter and Murphy, the Bowditch landscape design was largely preserved. Aerial photographs from the 1920s and 1930s provide valuable information on the landscape during this period. The images record the continuity of landscape features from earlier periods, as well as changes in the density of tree coverage and modifications to the landscape design that are no longer extant. (See Figures 50-53.)


\textsuperscript{103} Eudenbach, \textit{Estate Gardeners of Newport}, 120.
Figure 50: The Breakers, 1929. This aerial view of The Breakers captures the density of the tree canopy after over three decades of growth. The canopy was especially pronounced in the northwest quadrant of the site, along the serpentine walk and the perimeter streets, and around the north service wing. Note the two symmetrically placed clusters of trees within the turf lawn east of the house (on left in photo). These small stands of conifers (no longer extant) may have been planted in the lawn to frame views to and from the house or to buffer winds. It is unknown if this feature was original to the Bowditch design. Changes to the landscape from the original Bowditch design evident in this image include the placement of foundation plantings around the terraces, including shrubs and trees in semicircular formations around the corners of the North and South Terraces. Note also the pruned hedges bordering the eastern terminus of the serpentine walk where it intersected with the north end of the Cliff Walk. [Photo courtesy the Vanderbilt Family.]
Figure 51: The Breakers, 1910-1925. This aerial view, looking west, illustrates the character of the Cliff Walk and the adjacent cliffs, among other features. By this period, a man-made stone-faced retaining wall had been constructed to prevent erosion along the island’s natural shoreline. (The date of this intervention is unknown.) Rose and privet hedges at the edge of the turf lawn followed the sinuous curve of the Cliff Walk and provided additional privacy. [Photo courtesy the Art Institute of Chicago.]
Figure 52: The Breakers, 1929. Visible in this oblique aerial are linear paths that radiate symmetrically from the steps of the South Terrace to the southern section of the serpentine walk (on bottom right in photo). At some point (date unknown) these paths were added to Bowditch’s circulation system. The paths are constructed of noncontiguous square marble pavers and are still in place today, although many of the paving stones have been removed or are buried or partially buried under the turf. Note also the vegetation added to the lawn and around the terrace foundations (described above) and the ivy on the building façade. By this date, the density of the mature tree canopy concealed both the caretaker’s cottage and the children’s cottage. [Photo courtesy the Vanderbilt Family.]
Alice Vanderbilt (b. 1845), widow of Cornelius Vanderbilt II, died on April 22, 1934. In the last few years of her life, she lived in virtual retirement and was rarely seen in public.104 Upon her death, her youngest daughter Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi, inherited The Breakers. Gladys and her family regularly entertained and spent their summers at The Breakers.105

In 1938, a severe hurricane struck the United States, causing extensive destruction along the New England coast. Many of Newport’s great estates, including The Breakers, experienced significant and, in many cases, irreparable damage. Although the Vanderbilt family would occupy The Breakers for another ten years, the 1938 hurricane represents an important milestone in the landscape development of the property.

105 “600 Invited to American Debut of Miss Széchéni at Newport,” Washington Post, August 22, 1937.
LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS: 1893-1938

Natural Systems and Features
The steep coastal cliffs and flat promontory that characterized the site’s geomorphology during this period were the product of the natural processes that formed the island’s shoreline and oceanfront bluffs. As described for the period 1877-1885, this natural morphology was a significant factor in the site’s ongoing residential use during this period.

Spatial Organization
The spatial organization of the site was substantially transformed during this period. Whereas in previous periods, the organization of the site emphasized the physical and visual separation between the main house and the service areas, during this period, elements of the ground plane, the vertical plane, and the overhead plane were reconfigured to emphasize a unified space focused on the house. On the ground plane, the space was defined by the rectilinear grid of the municipal perimeter roads and the naturalistic course of the Cliff Walk. The ground plane was further articulated by circulation features including the formal entrance drives and the serpentine walk. The number of functional paths was reduced during this period due to the relocation of service buildings to off-site locations. Topographically, the site was relatively flat, as the large footprint of the house and its surrounding terraces had the effect of eliminating any traces of the mound on which the house was located during previous periods. On the vertical plane, the site’s spatial organization was defined primarily by the massing of the house, which rose in the center of the site, and by the drop-off along the cliff face. Clusters of trees around the perimeter of the site, within the northwest quadrant, and along the entrance drives and serpentine walk also articulated the vertical plane. Other vertical elements, including the caretaker’s cottage and the perimeter fence and gates, were set back along the edge of the property to maintain the visual prominence of the house. The children’s cottage articulated the vertical plane along the north drive (and helped provide a visual transition from the house to the perimeter fence). Overhead planes continued to be defined by views and vistas. These included the principal panoramic views from the house and terraces to the ocean and reciprocal views of the house from the Cliff Walk. The site’s spatial organization was also characterized by views of the house from the entrance gates and periodic views of the house, grounds, and ocean from various points along the serpentine walk.

Land Use
During this period, the site continued to be used primarily as a seasonal residence, accommodating all of its associated social and recreational uses. The land supported less back-of-the-house activities during this period as many of the service and support buildings had been relocated off site.
Cultural Traditions
The development of the landscape during this period continued to be influenced by Newport’s Gilded Age patterns of residential growth and construction. As such, the design and implementation of the landscape during this period was not restrained by financial limitations, and Vanderbilt worked with prominent designers on improvements to the estate, including landscape architect Ernest W. Bowditch and architect Richard Morris Hunt. Funding the ongoing maintenance of the grounds and gardens by Vanderbilt (and later his wife and heirs) was also not restrained by financial limitations during this period. The development of the landscape during this period was also influenced by Newport’s function as a summer colony. As such, the landscape was designed primarily for seasonal use, and the house and likely some plantings were winterized when the property was not occupied. During this period, the development of the landscape was also influenced the property’s head gardeners, whose cultural traditions and horticultural practices shaped the garden design.

Cluster Arrangement
The arrangement of structures in the landscape during this period continued to reflect the residential character of the grounds. The house was given primacy in the center of the site and faced southeast. The caretaker’s cottage was located on the western edge of the grounds in the northwest quadrant of the site. The children’s cottage, located north of the house, was given a distinctive setting to differentiate it from the main house and caretaker’s cottage.

Circulation
Historic plans, atlases, and photographs document the circulation system at The Breakers during this period. Municipal roads continued to define the boundaries of the property on three sides. The perimeter roads included Shepard Avenue on the north, Ochre Point Avenue on the west, and Ruggles Avenue on the south. Shepard Avenue was partially laid out, with the eastern half consisting of a gently undulating path that terminated in a circular oceanfront overlook. The Cliff Walk followed the general contour of the shoreline along the eastern edge of the site. The Cliff Walk extended north and south of the property lines to form a continuous path through adjacent estates. Photographic evidence indicates that, during this period, the Cliff Walk was at a lower elevation than the main lawn. (See Figure 54.)
During this period, significant changes were made to the site's internal circulation system, which consisted of both linear, formal elements and curvilinear, naturalistic features. The principal circulation features were the entrance drives, which featured a linear, symmetric layout and linked the entrance gates on Ochre Point and Shepard avenues with the forecourt and porte-cochère on the west façade of the house. The entrance drives provided a formal, ceremonial approach to Hunt’s Beaux-Arts mansion. The drives were greater in width than the secondary footpaths to accommodate horses and carriages and later, automobiles. The paving material from this period is unknown, but appears in historic photographs to be compact earth or gravel. Small-scale features associated with the entrance drives included three-quarter round stone curbs and rounded bollards or guard stones (see additional text below).

Secondary circulation features included the serpentine walk and its spur, the Cliff Walk, and several functional paths/access drives. The serpentine walk, designed by Bowditch, was a significant feature of this period. It was a social/recreational footpath that extended around three sides of the site's perimeter, providing the family and guests a shaded garden experience with controlled views of the house and ocean. Planted beds backed by arcs of evergreen trees and shrubs lined the path, and garden ornaments provided additional embellishment. The path followed a curvilinear, naturalistic route through the grounds and provided pedestrian connections with the Cliff Walk, looking south, no date. Note the change in elevation between the east lawn of The Breakers and the Cliff Walk, which was located on a narrow terrace. [Photo courtesy the Newport Historical Society.]
Walk. A spur from the northern section of the serpentine walk extended south past the children's cottage to the north entrance of the North Terrace. The paving material of the serpentine walk and its spur during this period is unknown but appears in historic photographs to be compact earth or gravel. Historic photographs also indicate that the paths featured a natural border without edging. The Cliff Walk was a social/recreational footpath that followed the natural contours of the cliffs along the eastern edge of the property and extended the entire length of the grounds. Historic photographs indicate that the path formed a narrow terrace at a lower elevation than the east lawn. The width, or varying widths, and paving material of the Cliff Walk during this period are unknown. Lastly, during this period, two informal footpaths were added to the landscape south of the house. The footpaths were composed of square marble pavers and extended from the South Terrace to the serpentine walk.

Functional paths/access drives during this period included the sidewalks flanking the entrance drives, the paths accessing the caretaker’s cottage, and a short service drive extended from the north drive to the north service wing. The sidewalks flanking the entrance drives featured three-quarter round stone curbs. The paving material of these sidewalks is unknown but appears in historic photographs to be compact earth or gravel. The width of the service drive could accommodate carriages and later, automobiles.

**Topography**

During this period, the site featured a relatively flat topography characteristic of the Ochre Point’s natural terrain. The high point in the topography was at the northwest corner of the site. The east lawn featured a gentle, southeasterly slope, and historic photographs indicate that there was a change in elevation between the east lawn and the Cliff Walk. During this period, a shallow depression in the northwest quadrant of the site served as the location of a lawn tennis court. Topographical features also included the irregular, steep drop-off along the cliffs to the ocean.

**Vegetation**

(The character of the vegetation during this period is based on archival correspondence, historic photographs, and period literature.)

South and east of the house was a smooth, verdant turf lawn. Hedges of Rosa rugosa and privet were planted along the edge of the lawn, following the sinuous curve of the Cliff Walk. During this period, individual trees were planted on the lawn near the walls of the terraces. (See Figure 49.) Additionally, two stands of conifers were planted near the middle of the lawn. (See Figures 50-53.) These symmetrically placed stands may have been implemented to frame views or to serve as a wind break. (It is unknown when these features were planted. At least one of the stands was destroyed during the 1938 hurricane.) With the exception of the east lawn, the landscape was planted with specimen trees on open lawn. Arboreal plantings included spruce, cedar, weeping
beeches, copper beeches, and hinoki cypress, among others. Later in this period, the tree canopy in the southern and western sections of the site became very dense. (See Figure 50.) A significant feature of the landscape during this period was the serpentine walk. Initially, the planted beds along the serpentine walk featured low-growing flowers massed in reference to their size, form and color. Behind the beds were rows of hardy shrubs and herbaceous perennials. Taller shrubs formed the rear of the composition and mirrored the serpentine course of the path. These included privet, Irish yew, Japanese and English holly, golden arborvitae, and juniper. Throughout this period, the general arrangement of plantings along the serpentine walk was maintained; however, plant materials were most likely adjusted as needed as the tree canopy created more shaded areas. Pergolas and trellises planted with clematis and other vines were also used during this period on the South Terrace and in sections of the landscape where screening was required. (See Figures 23 and 34.) The South Terrace was formally planted with flower beds that included alternanthera of several shades and sweet alyssum. English ivy covered the inclined banks of the beds. The North Terrace featured a rose garden that was initially planted with standard roses, half standard roses, hybrid perpetual roses, tea roses, and Wichuraian roses along the edge. The parterre gardens and rose garden were located in sunken beds to protect the plants from the winds that buffered the exposed site. (The terrace walls and balusters provided additional enclosure.) The formal entrance drives were planted with pin oak allées. (Both sections of the drive – the west entry drive from the Ochre Point Avenue entrance gate and the north drive from the Shepard Avenue entrance gate – were planted with pin oaks.) The narrow tree lawns flanking the entrance drives featured, at various points during this period, potted trees, conifers, and clipped catalpas.

Buildings and Structures
Buildings and structures from this period included the Richard Morris Hunt palazzo (1893-95), the Richard Morris Hunt caretaker’s cottage (1893-95), and the Peabody & Stearns children’s cottage (1886).

Views and Vistas
During this period, the landscape was characterized by uninterrupted, panoramic views generally east and southeast from the house and terraces to the ocean. Significant views also included views of the house from the entrance gates. The allées along the entrance drives helped to focus and define these views. The significance of the view from the Ochre Point Avenue entrance gate is demonstrated by the number of historic photographs taken from this viewpoint. Other views that characterized this period included views to the house and ocean from the children’s cottage; periodic views of the house and children’s cottage from the Cliff Walk; views from the Cliff Walk to the ocean; and periodic views of the house, children’s cottage, grounds, garden elements, and ocean from various points along the serpentine walk.
**Constructed Water Features**

Water features from this period included several decorative stone fountains. Fountains were located at the northeast corner of the North Terrace, in the middle of the south edge of the South Terrace, and within the turf panel of the forecourt.

**Small-Scale Features**

Small-scale features during this period included decorative garden ornaments as well as functional features. Decorative features included carved urns, stone statuary, fountain basins, a sundial, benches along the serpentine walk and on the terraces, a stone wellhead, and a carved stone column. Functional small-scale features included the Richard Morris Hunt perimeter fence and gates (1896), the Henri Bonnard bronze lamp posts, the heating plant skylights located behind the caretaker’s cottage, the hatch door in the Ochre Point Avenue sidewalk accessing the coal chute, drainage grates, and guard stones.

**Archaeological Sites**

It is unknown what archaeological sites may have existed on the site during this period.
POST-HURRICANE VANDERBILT OCCUPANCY AND MANAGEMENT
BY THE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF NEWPORT COUNTY, 1938-PRESENT

The great New England hurricane of 1938 was a significant turning point in the landscape development of The Breakers. The hurricane made landfall on September 21 and caused extensive damage along the northeastern coast of the United States, including the Rhode Island shore.\(^{106}\) The surging water and winds partially destroyed sections of the seawalls and Cliff Walk along Ochre Point, and the hurricane severely damaged the grounds of The Breakers. One account of the damage estimated that seventy-seven trees at The Breakers were destroyed.\(^{107}\) The disaster also uprooted shrubs, destroyed the flower and rose gardens, and toppled urns and garden statuary.\(^{108}\) (See Figure 55.) Clean up of the debris and fallen trees began as soon as possible following the storm. In a 1975 interview, head gardener Billy Murphy recounted the effort, stating: “We went to work for the next week cutting up the fallen trees and storing them in the stables for firewood. When we’d finished the wood covered the whole floor.”\(^{109}\) (See Figure 56.)

\(^{107}\) Eudenbach, *Estate Gardeners of Newport*, 121.
\(^{109}\) Eudenbach, *Estate Gardeners of Newport*, 121.
Although the nature of the landscape rehabilitation at The Breakers following the hurricane is largely unknown, work did include the planting of Norway maples along the entrance allées to replace the pin oaks lost during the storm.\textsuperscript{110} (These Norway maples have since been replaced with pin oaks.) Although contemporary accounts suggest that the grounds and gardens were replanted following the hurricane, the degree of rehabilitation that conformed to Bowditch’s original design is unknown.\textsuperscript{111} Similarly, there is little known regarding the damage and rehabilitation following the hurricanes that made landfall in the area in 1944 and 1954.

\textsuperscript{110} Interview with Bob Coyne, former caretaker at The Breakers, and Preservation Society of Newport County staff Bryan Coyne and Jeff Curtis, October 30, 2013.

\textsuperscript{111} A 1941 \textit{New York Times} article reported: “On Tuesday afternoon Mrs. Nicholas Brown is opening her gardens at Harbour Court and Countess Laszlo Széchenyi is opening those at The Breakers for the benefit of the Newport Civic League on Garden
After 1938, except for a brief period in 1944, the house was largely unoccupied by the family.\textsuperscript{112} Beginning in 1948, Countess Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi, who inherited the property from her mother Alice Vanderbilt in 1934, leased The Breakers to The Preservation Society of Newport County, which opened the house to the public. Although Countess Széchényi and later, her daughter Sylvia, maintained a family apartment in the upper floors of The Breakers for many years following the lease, it was during this period that the primary use of the property transitioned from residential to institutional use.

The Preservation Society of Newport County (PSNC) was founded in 1945 by concerned citizens with a shared interest in preserving and protecting the architectural heritage of Newport, Rhode Island. Under PSNC stewardship, The Breakers was opened to the public as a historic house museum.

One of the PSNC’s earliest projects at The Breakers concerned the Richard Morris Hunt fence and gates. In early 1949, Alexandria Iron Works, Inc. was commissioned to inspect the condition of the fence and gates and make recommendations for repair. The contractors also examined the “cat-walk from the Fisherman’s Walk to the out-

\textsuperscript{112} Smales, \textit{The Breakers: An Illustrated Handbook}, 40. According to Gladys R. Thomas, a Vanderbilt descendant, during the mid 1940s, the grounds of The Breakers supported a victory garden, which was located within the lawn opposite the children’s cottage. Research to date has not clarified the size or exact location of the garden.”

Figure 57: View of main entrance gate, no date. Note the informal ticket table/guard stand just inside the entrance gates (on right in photo). [Photo courtesy The Preservation Society of Newport County.]
fall manhole." The catwalk was an inclined ship's ladder type stair (no longer extant) that rested against the face of the cliffs. (See Figure 63.) Recommendations for the fence included cleaning and sandblasting, “metalizing” the bare metal with zinc, and repainting. In addition, the contractor recommended replacing the astragal and locking devices of the service gates, the catwalk, and the gate to the North Terrace with new galvanized units. A letter to the PSNC dated July 14, 1949, indicates that the fence was sandblasted and painted beginning that month. It is unknown if the gate to the North Terrace or other suggested items were replaced at this time.

Figure 58: The Breakers looking northeast along the west entry drive from Ochre Point Avenue, no date. This postcard view illustrates the open character of the entrance drive and remnants of the former pin oak allée. [Photo courtesy the Newport Historical Society.]

In 1955, the PSNC published an eighth edition of The Breakers: An Illustrated Handbook. The book gives a contemporary description of the landscape, noting that the allée was composed of a combination of pin oaks and maples and the parterre beds of the South Terrace had been replaced with turf. An excerpt reads:

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Lining the drive of “The Breakers” are rows of pin oaks and red maples, while scattered about the spacious lawns are specimens of stately elms, lindens and maples. Set back from the walk and sheltered from the prevailing southwest wind is a clump of glossy-leaved English holly. Nearby a group of Japanese maples with deeply lacinated foliage and subtle variation in color has for its background a stately copper beech.

Among the more unusual imported trees are two examples of the Blue Atlas Cedar, a native of North Africa and closely related to the Cedars of Lebanon of Biblical reference. These trees when seen in the late afternoon sun have a silver-blue foliage of rare beauty. The Chinese Ginko, directly opposite the port-cochère, is a specimen of beautiful symmetry whose foliage in the late Fall turns to a shining gold.

Clipped hedges of Japanese yew and Pfitzer juniper line the tree shaded foot paths that meander about the grounds. Informal planting of arbor vitae, taxus, Chinese juniper and dwarf hemlock provide attractive foregrounds for the walls that enclose the formally landscaped terrace. The sunken gardens on the [South Terrace] were originally laid out in parterre, carefully trimmed dwarf foliage plants arranged in an intricate design, reminding one of a beautiful carpet. Due to the scarcity of labor during the last war, these parterre gardens were eliminated and the area planted in lawns.

The wide borders, paralleling the magnificent wrought-iron fence, are planted with rhododendrons, laurel, dogwoods, and many other flowering shrubs that effectively screen the grounds from street traffic and give to the visitor a feeling of complete seclusion.

The grounds today bear little evidence of the terrible destruction wrought by the great New England hurricanes of 1938, 1944, and 1954. To the casual observer it is almost unbelievable that more than one hundred trees were blown down or so severely damaged that they had to be removed. The scars and mutilations on some of the trees still standing bear mute witness to the terribly destructive force of the wind, and it is a great wonder that the grounds were not absolutely denuded.¹¹⁵

Several aerial photographs from the 1950s provide additional insight into the character of the landscape in the early years of the PSNC’s management. (See Figures 59, 60, and 62.) Countess Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi (b. 1886) died in 1965, leaving the house to her five daughters. Her second youngest daughter, Countess Sylvia Szápáry (b. 1919), maintained a residence at The Breakers until her death in 1998.

Figure 59: The Breakers, 1958. Several notable features of the original Bowditch landscape were absent from the grounds by this date. The parterre beds of the South Terrace were no longer being maintained and were replaced with turf. Also, many of the trees along the entrance allée were missing. Note also the absence of the two conifer stands within the east lawn and the sparse tree canopy. [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]
Figure 60: The Breakers, 1958. Note that at this time, the serpentine walk appears intact to its original design. The character of the vegetation along the serpentine walk, especially near its intersection with the west entry drive and near the caretaker’s cottage, was similar to earlier periods. Note the eastern terminus of Shepard Avenue (on right in photo) retains its original configuration. [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]

Figure 61: Detail from Figure 60, 1958. Note that the stone wellhead (center in photo) is visible along the serpentine walk behind an arc of privet. [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]
Figure 62: The Breakers, 1958. At this time, the tree canopy of the western half of the property was much thinner than the previous period. (See Figures 50-53.) Note the continuous hedge along the Cliff Walk. [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]

Figure 63: Detail of Figure 62. This detail illustrates the location of the ladder (no longer extant) that provided access to the out-fall manhole (near center in photo) from the Cliff Walk. The manhole is visible on Bowditch’s 1895 site plan. (See Figure 20.) [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]
Following larger trends in the historic preservation movement, Newport’s historic sites were given national recognition and local protection starting in the 1960s. In 1965, the City of Newport passed an ordinance establishing the Newport Historic District (a local historic district) and the Newport Historic District Commission. A few years later, in 1968, the Newport National Historic Landmark District was designated by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Breakers was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places on September 10, 1971. The same year, the house and grounds were documented as part of the National Park Service’s Historic American Building Survey (HABS) program. Photographs taken as part of the survey document the changes and alternations to the landscape that occurred over the first two decades of this period. (See Figures 65-68.) In 1975, the Ochre Point-Cliffs Historic District, which included The Breakers, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The same year, the Cliff Walk was designated a National Recreational Trail by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The 3.5-mile-long shoreline trail wrapped around the south and east sides of Newport and provided a public right of way over private property.

Updated documentation for the Newport National Historic Landmark District nomination was prepared in 1995. See Adams, National Register of Historic Places - Registration Form, “Newport National Historic Landmark District,” April 10, 1995.
Figure 65: View of the children’s cottage, 1971. Small shrubs lined the path to the children’s cottage and served as foundation plantings. [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]
Figure 66: The Breakers, 1971. Note the absence of ivy along the walls of the terraces. [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]
Figure 67: North Terrace, 1971. By this date, the former rose garden of the North Terrace had been replaced with planted beds and turf. [Photo courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.]
In 1972, the PSNC purchased The Breakers from the Vanderbilt Family.117 A few years later, in 1976, John “Echo” Burrows was hired by the PSNC to serve as head gardener for their properties. At The Breakers, Burrows collaborated with the Vanderbilt family gardener, Billy Murphy. Murphy earned his position as head gardener in 1931 and continued his tenure at The Breakers until 1982.

117 The PSNC purchased the residence from Alice Hadik; Gladys Talbot Peterson; Nandine Eltz and Alexander E. Elitz; Gladys R. Thomas and Landon Thomas, Jr.; Cornelia Coudenhove-Kalergi and Hans Heinrich Coudenhove-Kalergi; Eugene B. Roberts, Jr.; Countess Sylvia Szápáry and Anthony Szápáry. As mentioned earlier, following the sale, Countess Szápáry continued to maintain and apartment on the third floor of the house, which she used periodically until her death in 1998.”
In 1976, a *New York Times* article described the deteriorated condition of parts of Newport's Cliff Walk. The article noted that it was no longer possible to follow the entire length of the path as, “waves and weather have eaten away great chunks of the cliff, and masses of stone and earth have toppled into the sea.”\(^{118}\) Over the decades, various improvements were made to improve conditions along the Cliff Walk. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers made basic repairs to the paths and built revetments, and, in the early 1990s, new retaining walls were constructed to control erosion and repair hurricane damage. Portions of the walk were paved and safety rails were installed.\(^{119}\)

Changes to The Breakers' landscape by the PSNC included the construction of a wooden ticket booth (ca. 1968) on the south side of the west entry drive. Square marble pavers were used to pave the approach to the ticket booth.\(^{120}\) (See Figures 69-70.) Over the years the ticket booth was expanded with additions to the rear of the structure. In the 1970s, the PSNC installed a pumping station under the east lawn and reestablished the parterre beds of the South Terrace, which had not been maintained since at least the late 1950s.\(^{121}\) Later, a wooden shed for sheltering vending machines was installed along the serpentine walk behind the ticket booth.\(^{122}\) (See Figure 71.) Other alterations included the installation of a chain-link fence along the eastern edge of the property, which for the first time fenced off the east lawn from the Cliff Walk and prevented pedestrian access along the northern section of the serpentine walk. (See Figure 72.)

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\(^{120}\) The square marble pavers used to pave the approach to the ticket booth may have originally been located around the wellhead or may have come from the symmetrical linear paths that radiate from the steps of the South Terrace, which are also constructed of square marble pavers. Interview with Bob Coyne, former caretaker at The Breakers, and Preservation Society of Newport County staff Bryan Coyne and Jeff Curtis, October 30, 2013.

\(^{121}\) Ibid.

\(^{122}\) Sources differ as to the date that the shed was installed. A document titled “Existing Facilities” on the PSNC’s website states that it was installed in the 1980s, while an interview with current and former staff of the PSNC gives the date as the 1990s. See Preservation Society of Newport County, “Existing Facilities,” available online at http://www.thebreakerswelcomecenter.org, and Interview with Bob Coyne, former caretaker at The Breakers, and Preservation Society of Newport County staff Bryan Coyne and Jeff Curtis, October 30, 2013.
Figure 69: Ticket booth, 2013. [Robinson & Associates]
Figure 70: Marble pavers in front of the ticket booth, 2013. [Robinson & Associates]
Figure 71: Vending machine shelter, 2013. [Robinson & Associates]
By the late 1980s, conditions along the pedestrian paths at The Breakers had deteriorated. Perhaps in an effort to increase visitor safety and provide universal access, in 1989 or 1990, the footpaths were paved with asphalt. This included the serpentine walk and its spur to the North Terrace and the sidewalks flanking the entrance drives. (The asphalt was laid over the existing paths generally following the existing alignment. Changes to the width of the serpentine walk and its spur are unknown.) Also at this time, steel edging was laid in certain sections along the serpentine walk and other footpaths, including those within the North and South Terraces. Chain railings
were also added along some of the footpaths at this time. Today, portions of the serpentine walk are significantly overgrown, preventing access to the entire course of the path.

In 1995, rows of pin oaks were planted along both sides of the west entry drive to restore the oak allée featured in Bowditch’s original landscape design. Funding for the project was provided by members of the Vanderbilt family to commemorate the 100th anniversary of The Breakers.

On October 12, 1994, The Breakers was designated a National Historic Landmark, a nationally significant historic resource that possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. As visitorship to The Breakers increased, the house and landscape required additional facilities to accommodate growing numbers of museum guests. In 2000, the PSNC erected a seasonal canvas tent behind the caretaker’s cottage for ticketing and marketing. To access the tent, a new asphalt path was laid east of the caretaker’s cottage, linking the sidewalk flanking the west entry drive with the opening to the tent. A row of clipped hedges was planted on either side of the path. (See Figure 73.) Later, in 2006, a small trailer was installed near the tent to provide restroom facilities for visitors.

Figure 73: Caretaker’s cottage and adjacent path to seasonal canvas tent, 2013. [Robinson & Associates]

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123 Interview with Bob Coyne, former caretaker at The Breakers, and Preservation Society of Newport County staff Bryan Coyne and Jeff Curtis, October 30, 2013. To date, a scope of work or project report documenting the exact nature of the path improvements has not been identified.
LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS: 1938-PRESENT

Natural Systems and Features
The steep coastal cliffs and flat promontory that characterized the site’s geomorphology during this period were the product of the natural processes that formed the island’s shoreline and oceanfront bluffs.

Spatial Organization
The spatial organization of the site was altered during this period to accommodate its new institutional function. On the ground plane, the space continued to be defined by the rectilinear grid of the municipal perimeter roads and the formal entrance drives. The ground plane was less articulated by the serpentine walk during this period because of its deterioration, which limited access. Also during this period, the Cliff Walk was no longer a defining element of the landscape’s spatial organization, as it was disconnected from the grounds through the installation of a chain-link fence. Topographically, the site featured a relatively flat surface with the exception of the terraced Cliff Walk and abrupt rock cliffs on the east edge. On the vertical plane, the site’s spatial organization was defined primarily by the massing of the house, which rose in the center of the site. Clusters of trees around the perimeter of the site, within the lawns surrounding the house, and along the entrance drives and serpentine walk also articulated the vertical plane. Other vertical elements included the caretaker’s cottage, the children’s cottage, and the perimeter fence and gates. During this period, additional vertical elements that were added to the landscape further defined the spatial organization of the landscape. These included the chain-link fence along the Cliff Walk, the ticket booth, the vending machine shelter, the seasonal tent, and the trailer. Overhead planes continued to be defined by views and vistas. These included the principal panoramic views from the house and terraces to the ocean and reciprocal views of the house from the serpentine walk. Other important views included the view of the house from the entrance gates, periodic views of the house, grounds, and ocean from various points along the serpentine walk, and periodic views of the house from the Cliff Walk.

Land Use
This period represented a significant change in land use at The Breakers. The primary use of the landscape was institutional, supporting The Breakers’ function as a historic house museum. The land supported back-of-the-house activities of the museum during this period, including ticketing and visitor services. During most of this period, a caretaker occupied the caretaker’s cottage throughout the year.
Cultural Traditions
The development of the landscape during this period was influenced by Newport’s local historic preservation movement and its stewardship by the PSNC. The care and maintenance of the landscape was influenced by the purpose and mission of the organization. During this period, the landscape was no longer primarily for seasonal use, as the museum and grounds were open to the public throughout the year.

Cluster Arrangement
The arrangement of structures in the landscape during this period reflected the institutional character of the grounds. The historic arrangement of the house, caretaker’s cottage, and children’s cottage was preserved during this period. New support and service structures were added along the west entry drive and in the northwest quadrant of the site.

Circulation
During this period, municipal roads continued to define the boundaries of the property on three sides. The perimeter roads included Shepard Avenue on the north, Ochre Point Avenue on the west, and Ruggles Avenue on the south. Principal circulation features during this period were the entrance drives, which featured a linear, symmetrical layout and linked the entrance gates on Ochre Point and Shepard avenues with the forecourt and porte-cochère on the west façade of the house. During this period, the entrance drives were no longer primarily used for automobiles as access to the grounds was limited. The paving material of the entrance drives was pea gravel, and small-scale features associated with the drives included three-quarter round stone curbs and rounded guard stones.

Secondary circulation features included the serpentine walk and its spur, the Cliff Walk, the informal footpaths from the South Terrace to the serpentine walk, and several functional paths/access drives. The serpentine walk was originally designed as a social/recreational footpath that followed a curvilinear, naturalistic route through the grounds. During this period, its use and character were altered. Although the original route remained intact, it was no longer fully accessible due to overgrown vegetation and fencing. In addition, the serpentine walk no longer provided pedestrian access to the Cliff Walk. During this period, the serpentine walk was paved with asphalt, and sections were modified with steel edging and post-and-chain fences. The Cliff Walk was a social/recreational footpath that followed the natural contours of the cliffs along the eastern edge of the property and extended the entire length of the grounds. In relation to the circulation system of The Breakers, the Cliff Walk was changed during this period as direct access from the serpentine walk was prohibited with the installation of chain-link perimeter fencing. The Cliff Walk formed a narrow terrace along the eastern edge of the site at a lower elevation than the east lawn. An informal path extended from South Terrace to the southern
section of the serpentine walk. It was composed of square marble pavers. During this period, passage along these footpaths was limited as many of the pavers were removed or overgrown with turf.

Functional paths/access drives during this period included the sidewalks flanking the entrance drives, the path accessing the caretaker’s cottage, and short service drive extending from the north drive to the north service wing. The sidewalks flanking the entrance drives were paved with asphalt and featured three-quarter round stone curbs. New functional paths added to the landscape during this period included the apron accessing the ticket booth and the path to the visitor tent and trailer.

**Topography**

During this period, the site featured a relatively flat topography characteristic of the Ochre Point’s natural terrain. The high point in the topography was at the northwest corner of the site. The east lawn featured a gentle, southeasterly slope. The terraces surrounding the house protected raised parterre gardens. A shallow depression in the northwest quadrant of the site was a remnant of a lawn tennis court. Other topographical features included the narrow terrace of the Cliff Walk and the irregular, steep drop-off along the cliffs to the ocean.

**Vegetation**

The character of the vegetation was significantly altered during this period by the 1938 hurricane and subsequent storms. Management by the PSNC also impacted the character of the vegetation during this period as the site was no longer primarily used as a private residence and the grounds were modified to meet the needs and constraints of a public institution. During this period, the vegetation south and east of the house continued to be characterized by a smooth, verdant turf lawn. Hedges of Rosa rugosa and privet were located along the edge of the lawn, generally following the curve of the Cliff Walk. With the exception of the east lawn, the landscape featured specimen trees on open turf. Arboreal plantings included elms, lindens, maples, Blue Atlas cedar, ginkgo, and copper beech, among others. During the early part of this period, the entrance drives were planted with allées consisting of Norway maple and pin oak. Later, the allée extending from the Ochre Point Avenue entrance gate was replanted with pin oaks based on historical research. The serpentine walk during this period was lined with yew, Chinese juniper, and other shrubs that were, for the most part, largely overgrown. During the early part of this period, the former parterres of the South Terrace were planted with turf. Later, parterre beds were reintroduced. The former rose garden of the North Terrace was replanted with symmetrically placed planted beds and turf. Foundation plantings along the terrace walls included arbor vitae, Chinese juniper, taxus, and dwarf hemlock. Along the perimeter fence were rhododendrons, laurel, dogwoods, and flowering shrubs.
**Buildings and Structures**
Buildings and structures from this period included the Richard Morris Hunt palazzo (1893-95), the Richard Morris Hunt caretaker’s cottage (1893-95), the Peabody & Stearns children’s cottage (1886), the wooden ticket booth (ca. 1968), and the vending machine structure (ca. 1980s-90s). Temporary structures added to the landscape during this period included the seasonal canvas tent (2000) and the trailer (2006).

**Views and Vistas**
During this period, the landscape was characterized by uninterrupted, panoramic views generally east and southeast from the house and terraces to the ocean. Significant views also included views of the house from the entrance gates. The allée along the west entrance drive was replanted based on historical research to help focus and define this view. Other views that characterized this period included views to the house and ocean from the children’s cottage; periodic views of the house and children’s cottage from the Cliff Walk; and views from the Cliff Walk to the ocean. Due to the presence of overgrown vegetation along the path, periodic views of the house, children’s cottage, grounds, garden elements, and ocean from various points along the serpentine walk were largely blocked or obscured during this period.

**Constructed Water Features**
Water features from this period included several decorative stone fountains. Fountains were located at the northeast corner of the North Terrace, in the middle of the south edge of the South Terrace, and within the turf panel of the forecourt.

**Small-Scale Features**
Small-scale features during this period included decorative garden ornaments as well as functional features. Decorative features included carved urns, stone statuary, fountain basins, a sundial, benches along the serpentine walk and on the terraces, a stone wellhead, and a carved stone column. Functional small-scale features included the Richard Morris Hunt perimeter fence and gates (1896), the Henri Bonnard bronze lamp posts, the hatch door in the Ochre Point Avenue sidewalk accessing the coal chute, drainage grates, and guard stones. Small-scale features added during this period included the chain-link fencing, the post-and-chain fencing, and museum signage.

**Archaeological Sites**
It is unknown what archaeological sites may have existed on the site during this period.
PERIOD PLANS

The purpose of period plans in a cultural landscape report is to graphically represent the change in landscape over time. They are to be rendered in a standard and consistent graphic style so as to clearly document changes from one period to the next. The periods selected for the period plans are based on dates in which significant changes occurred. These align with changes in ownership and events that altered the physical site, such as the 1892 fire and the 1938 hurricane. They are generally in line with the periods identified in the Site History section of this report, with two exceptions. First, there is no plan of the colonial period through 1877 (colonial to 1877) as this was prior to significant site development. Second, the last period (1938-present) was divided into two plans: ownership by Vanderbilt family but management by PSNC (1938-1972) and ownership by PSNC (1972-present).

The Period Plans were generated using resources found throughout the research phase, including but not limited to plat maps, aerial photography, historic site photographs, a site-scale existing conditions survey, the Bartlett tree inventory, and Bartlett tree core samples. More detailed descriptions of the specific resources utilized in the development of each plan are included in the associated text. There are also significant areas on each plan where we have limited documentation, and so these areas were developed with some level of inference, based on evidence in other periods and realistic assumptions of design and use. Each plan is marked with a thin, black dashed line the areas in which the documented design is directly derived from photographic evidence. Areas outside the dashed lines are based on less substantial support data, yet reflect a reasonable approximation of the design.
Lorillard Occupancy of Peabody & Stearns Villa, 1877-1885

In 1877 Pierre Lorillard bought the land from William Beach Lawrence and commissioned the architecture firm Peabody & Stearns to build a villa, stables, and gatehouse on the property, and Ernest W. Bowditch to design the landscape. Bowditch, influenced by the romantic landscape designs of A.J. Downing and F.L. Olmstead, designed The Breakers in a picturesque style, featuring an expansive lawn, long and controlled views, canopy trees and dense shrub massing with little focus on herbaceous planting.

The base for this period plan is derived from an 1883 Atlas of the City of Newport, with influence from an 1878 Galt & Hoy perspective map of Newport. Though both of these images display some freedom with artistic license, together they show the general layout of building footprints, paths, and vegetation massing that make up the spatial organization of the property. They also show how the property changed from 1878 to 1883 with the addition of Shepard Avenue on the north side of the lot. The character of planting and locations of garden beds is deduced from site photographs.

Notes:

1. The original parcel of land purchased by Lorillard was approximately 11 acres (sources differ on the size, see the Site History section for more detailed description). In 1882 Lorillard acquired more land, enlarging the estate to 13 acres. It is our assumption that the additional land was the northern section of the site, perhaps occurring with the construction of Shepard Avenue, or at the time Vinland, the property to the north, was designed. Comparisons of the 1878 Galt & Hoy image and the 1883 Hopkins map support this claim. From a design standpoint, it is logical that the stable and path network were constructed along the north perimeter of the property, but then the northern boundary shifted.

2. The general planting strategy in this period was to screen the perimeter of the property with a dense thicket with mixed shrubs, trees, evergreen and deciduous plants for privacy and to create sense of enclosure. Important viewsheds included the approach to the villa from the oval drive, and the panoramic view to the ocean, framed by vegetation masses. Meandering pathways, portions of which were lined with a thin grass strip and a flowering groundcover border, flowed though the thicket and opened to the great lawn.

3. The grounds around the house were planted with ornamental shaped gardens, some with stone edging. These gardens had tropical plants mixed with flowering shrubs and groundcovers and likely required higher maintenance than the thicket planting. Based on the varying character of these two types of plantings, it is our assumption that the ornamental garden beds were designed and planted by the Lorillard’s gardener, Richard Gardner, while Bowditch designed the path and thicket planting.
THE BREAKERS
1877-1885 PERIOD PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 100'

LEGEND

- Deciduous Tree (Unknown Species)
- European Beech
- Norway Maple
- Pin Oak
- Deciduous Tree Dead or Removed
- Standard Tree
- Potted Standard
- Evergreen Tree
- Evergreen Tree Dead or Removed
- Evergreen Tree Massing
- Vegetative Massing
- Screening Shrubs
- Decorative Shrubs
- Vines / Groundcover
- Skyline
- Building - New This Period
- Building - Existing
- Building - Underground
- Skylights
- Flower Garden
- Lawn
- Asphalt
- Chippings
- Concrete
- Crushed Stone / Gravel
- Stone Terrace
- Marble Pavers
- Granite Steps
- Edge of Pavement
- Metal Edge
- Area of Photographic Documentation

ATLANTIC OCEAN
CUME ROAD
RANDOLPH AVENUE
NORTH STREET
SANDY HOOK ROAD
SANDY HOOK ROAD
Lorillard’s Breakers entrance from Ochre Point Avenue, estimated date circa 1877-1892. Courtesy Redwood Library.

Entry drive looking northwest from oval drive to gatehouse, top of stable in background, estimated date circa 1877-1892. Courtesy the Preservation Society of Newport County.

Lorillard’s Breakers, looking southeast from oval drive, estimated date circa 1877-1892. Courtesy Redwood Library.

Lorillard’s Breakers, looking northeast from oval drive, estimated date circa 1877-1882. Courtesy the Newport Historical Society.
Lorillard’s Breakers, looking north, estimated date circa 1877-1892. Courtesy Newport Historical Society.

Lorillard’s Breakers, looking north, estimated date circa 1877-1892. Courtesy the Preservation Society of Newport County.
Vanderbilt Occupancy of the Peabody & Stearns Villa, 1885-1892

The second period describes the Vanderbilt occupancy of the Peabody & Stearns villa. In 1885 Cornelius Vanderbilt purchased The Breakers from Lorillard. He commissioned the same architecture firm, Peabody & Stearns, to build an addition to the north side of the villa as a service wing, as well as a separate Children’s cottage on the north side of the property. He also commissioned Lord & Burnham to “expand” the greenhouse in the northwest corner of the property. Documentation suggests that Lorillard had built a greenhouse at some point in this location, yet there is no record of its construction, design, or exact location (see the Site History section for a more detailed description). With the various additions to the property and the 1882 expansion to the north the paths were adjusted as represented in the 1893 Atlas of the City of Newport. According to photographs, the general character of the planting remained unchanged, but the ornamental gardens around the house were simplified. Additional flower gardens were added around the Children’s cottage. This period continues until 1892 when a fire destroyed the Peabody & Stearns villa.

Documentation for this period includes the 1893 atlas, which provides the general layout of the buildings and circulation, and a series of historic photographs. Vegetation information is deduced from site photographs from this period and the preceding period.

Notes:

1. Alignment of the serpentine path along southern perimeter carries over into later periods and was used as part of the curvilinear path of the serpentine walk. This stretch of path, complete with the catch basins and drainage system, is the oldest feature on the site.

2. The footprint of the palm house and greenhouse is here represented as it was shown in the 1893 Atlas. A more detailed architectural floorplan can be seen in the Site History section of this report.
THE BREAKERS
1885-1892 PERIOD PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 100'
Vanderbilt’s occupancy of Peabody & Stearns’ villa, looking north. Two chimneys in background are part of new addition. Estimated date circa 1885-1892. Courtesy the Preservation Society of Newport County.
Children’s cottage, estimated date circa 1885-1892. Courtesy the Preservation Society of Newport County.

Children’s cottage, estimated date circa 1885-1892. Courtesy Cornell University Library.
Vanderbilt Occupancy of the Richard Morris Hunt Palazzo, 1893-1938

This period, the period of significance, is defined by Vanderbilt’s occupancy of Hunt’s palazzo from the beginning of construction throughout the era in which the property was used and maintained to the design intent. This begins in 1893 and continues to 1938 when a destructive hurricane significantly altered the landscape, conditions and maintenance began to decline, and when its occupancy by the Vanderbilt family grew infrequent.

Following the 1892 fire, Vanderbilt commissioned architect Richard Morris Hunt to design a new villa, an Italian Renaissance-inspired palazzo, in a Beaux Arts tradition. The new villa was constructed in the same general footprint as the previous one so as not to disturb the extensive perimeter planting. The gatehouse was replaced to match the character of the new Breakers, and the greenhouses and stables were moved off-property. The children’s cottage, painted white to compliment the other architecture, is the only remnant from the Peabody & Stearns’ Breakers.

The base for this plan is from the survey of the existing site by National Surveyors-Developers, September, 2013. The general layout of the paths and drives is close to that of Bowditch’s plan of the water system, which is the only plan evidence found that illustrates the original path design. The descriptions and prints in the 1896 Gardens and Gardening article provide telling insight into the character of the landscape in the early years, and the 1914 Francis Benjamin Johnston images, the 1929 aerials, and other select images describe the garden at different stages of maturity.

Acknowledging the length of the period and that landscapes grow over time thus changing the spatial quality of the site, one question the CLR team faced was how to represent the Period Plan in a way that most accurately represents the character of the time and design intent. Considering that it took years for the garden to grow to its full potential, the plan represents the landscape in the middle to latter-half of the period. Known changes and alterations during the period are noted and described below.

Notes:

1. For privacy and to preserve the ocean views from The Breakers, the cliff walk was lowered along the whole property and lined with a steep embankment.

2. A lawn tennis court was constructed just west of the north drive sometime in the late 1920s or early 1930s for Gladys Vanderbilt and her husband, Count Laszlo Széchenyi, who were both avid tennis players.

3. We assume that the pin oak allée was designed to be continuous along the west side of the north drive, but 1929 aerials show a hedge in place of trees. This may have been built as a screen for the lawn tennis court.
Aerial image, looking north, estimated date circa 1910-1925. Courtesy Art Institute of Chicago.

Aerial image looking west, circa 1932-1934. Courtesy Southern Methodist University.
Aerial image, looking southeast, circa 1929. Courtesy Vanderbilt Family Archives.

Aerial image looking east, circa 1929. Courtesy Vanderbilt Family Archives.
Serpentine walk from north gate looking west, circa 1914. Courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

Serpentine walk looking east to north gate, circa 1914. Courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.
Pergola on South Parterre, circa 1914. Courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

Looking south from north gate, circa 1895. Courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.
Garden Walk. Image from Lucius D. Davis “The Breakers,” Gardens and Gardening, 1 no. 7 (Newport, RI 1896): 111-120.

Garden Walk. Image from Lucius D. Davis “The Breakers,” Gardens and Gardening, 1 no. 7 (Newport, RI 1896): 111-120.
Column in northwest quadrant along garden walk, circa 1914. Courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

Post-Hurricane Vanderbilt Occupancy and Management by the Preservation Society, 1938-1972

After the 1938 hurricane, the grounds never returned to the grandeur of the Gilded Age due to constraints on labor and resources. Some fallen beech and oak trees were replaced with Norway maples, likely due to the popularity, affordability and prevalence of the trees at the time. Though given the comparatively scarce canopy cover in aerials from the 1950s not all fallen trees were replaced. The garden borders were not maintained, and during World War II even the parterre garden plantings were removed due to lack of labor. The Breakers opened as a house museum in 1948 and was then managed, but not owned, by the Preservation Society of Newport County (PSNC). In 1968 a small ticketing booth was constructed near the front entrance.

Information for this period plan is predominantly from the series of 1958 aerials (Gottscho-Schielsinger collection, Library of Congress), true aerials from Nationwide Environmental Title Research available online, and a series of site photos from a 1971 Historic American Buildings Survey.

Notes:

1. According to an on-site interview with Bob Coyne, former caretaker of the property and tenant of the caretaker’s cottage, the area just north of the cottage was previously used as a yard for the tenant. It was enclosed with a semicircular fence. (Interview October, 2013)

2. Based on aerial photographs and the tree coring results, the evergreen stands along the serpentine walk were planted in the 1940 or 50s. They were planted to replace those lost in the 1938 or 1954 hurricanes.

3. The ticketing booth was constructed in 1968, just south of the west entrance.

4. Many of the pin oaks in the entrance drive allées were lost in the 1938 hurricane. The west entry drive was replanted with Norway maples.

5. The west side of the north parterre had been planted with a row of beech trees, presumably to screen views of the service area. By 1958 many of these trees had died.

6. The bedding plantings in the sunken garden of the south parterre were removed during this period.

7. The northern evergreen grouping on the east lawn was taken out by the 1938 hurricane. The southern grouping remained for some time afterwards, but had been removed by 1958.
Aerial looking east, circa 1938. Courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

Aerial looking west, circa 1938.Courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.
Aerial looking south, circa 1958. Courtesy the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

Aerial, circa 1963. Courtesy the Preservation Society of Newport County.
West Gate, estimated date 1948-1968. Courtesy the Preservation Society of Newport County.

Palazzo from west entry drive, estimated date circa 1948-1990. Courtesy the Preservation Society of Newport County.

Postcard of Palazzo from west entry drive; lack of allée along drive suggest a date soon after 1938 hurricane. Estimated date circa 1939. Courtesy the Newport Historical Society.
Ownership by the Preservation Society, 1972-Present

In 1972 the PSNC purchased The Breakers from the heirs of the Vanderbilt family and continued to manage it as a house museum with a mission of historical accuracy. In the early 1980s the PSNC reestablished the plantings on the south parterre garden and later that decade repaved the deteriorating walkways with asphalt. In 1998 the pin oak allée on the west entry drive, which had been replaced with Norway maples after the 1938 hurricane, was replanted. Several other Norway maples across the site were replaced with European beech. Other additions included structures for visitor amenities, such as the ticketing tent, the vending machine shed, and portable restrooms.

Information for this period came primarily from the 2013 site survey, on-site interviews with current and former staff, and several site surveys conducted by the CLR team.

Notes:

1. In 1998 the pin oak allée on the west entry drive, was replanted. This replaced the Norway maples that were planted immediately after the 1938 hurricane to replace the original pin oaks.

2. Several additions to the property were made to accommodate visitor needs, such as the ticketing tent, portable restrooms, and vending machine shed. The skylights of the boiler room and the caretaker’s yard that were previously in this area were removed.

3. A portion of paving was added for visitor access, presumably when the Preservation Society of Newport County repaved the serpentine walk in the 1980s.

4. The northeast portion of the serpentine walk was not rebuilt and is now hardly distinguishable. The portion between the north terrace and children’s cottage was widened and reinforced with a metal edge, presumably to accommodate greater foot traffic.

5. In 2013 a large beech tree just south of the children’s cottage fell. The area was replaced with a planting of Japanese pieris and a Japanese maple.

6. Shepard Avenue was widened, most likely to accommodate street parking for Salve Regina University.

7. Bedding planting in South Parterre garden was reestablished in mid-1970s.

8. Many beech trees in northwest quadrant, including a large beech by the southeast corner of the caretaker’s cottage, were felled in 1991 by hurricane Bob. The PSNC replaced many with new beech. The one by the caretaker’s cottage was replaced, but in 2000 was moved to the northeast corner of the property to accommodate the ticketing tent.
EXISTING CONDITIONS

Overview

The Breakers is a house museum managed by PSNC. It hosts 400,000 visitors every year from across the nation and the globe, ranking it among the top ten most visited house museums in the United States. The annual maintenance budget ranges from $1.6-$1.9 million annually for the property, which includes care for the house and the landscape. The busiest days are summer weekends, but the museum is open year round. Areas on the property with the highest concentration of visitors are the Palazzo, the parterre gardens, the children’s cottage and service areas near the front gate. In fair weather many guests venture onto the great lawn from the east terrace. The Cliff Walk also gets high volumes of visitors, as a popular public right-of-way across the eastern edge of the property.

The existing condition for The Breakers landscape was studied in an exhaustive site investigation. The research component included review of the National Register nomination, interviews with past and present groundskeepers and staff regarding general management strategies, and the collection and comparative analysis of historic and current site photographs. Multiple site visits and interviews with the current groundskeeper and staff members provided insight on management strategies and opportunities to collect photographic evidence and first-hand evaluations of existing conditions. Surveys of the site included a detailed, full-scale survey performed by National Surveyor-Developers Inc. of Woonsocket, RI, in September 2013, and The Breakers Tree Inventory tracked by Bartlett Tree Experts, ongoing since 1993. Additionally, Bartlett Tree Experts used tree core sampling techniques to determine the age of select trees to determine the historical value of the remaining vegetative material.

The following pages are a compilation of the existing conditions analysis that reviews in detail the character zones, spatial organization, building cluster arrangement, topography and hydrology, vegetation, circulation and paving materials, and site structures and features.

1 Welcome Center Preservation Society Brief.
THE BREAKERS
EXISTING CONDITIONS PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 100’
EXISTING CHARACTER ZONES

The existing landscape of The Breakers is a result of a combination of influences from multiple designers and styles and it exemplifies a layering of design ideas. As discussed in the site history portion of this report, the existing landscape exhibits the Beaux Arts and picturesque styles, with some influences from the Victorian era. This complexity results in manifold of distinct character zones, which are defined by the physical qualities of a landscape (such as landforms, structural clusters, and masses of vegetation) and the type and concentration of cultural resources. Character [zones] are based on the existing condition of the characteristics and features that define and illustrate the significance of the landscape.1 The eight existing character zones on The Breakers property today include: the east lawn, the Newport Cliff Walk, Hunt’s Beaux-Arts Garden areas, entrance drives, canopy over turf areas, the south lawn, perimeter planting and serpentine walk, and service.

1. OPEN SEASIDE LAWN
The East Lawn character zone is defined by a gentle, southeasterly sloping topography and grand open lawn with sweeping views of the Atlantic Ocean. It is bordered on the eastern side by rose and privet hedges and a chain link fence, and on the western edge by the walls of the palazzo and balustrades.

2. NEWPORT CLIFF WALK
The Newport Cliff Walk sits on a recessed terrace on the eastern edge of the property and is dominated by the ocean views. It is open to the public and has the feel of a public linear park or seaside walk that is heavily used by Newport residents and tourists.

3. HUNT’S BEAUX-ARTS LANDSCAPE AREAS
The Beaux-Arts Garden areas compose one character zone, which is defined by the limestone walls and balustrades that surround each of the following landscape units: the forecourt, north parterre, south parterre, and east terrace. Each room is decorated with fountains and stone statuary, and there is a high level of formality. The spaces serve as transition zones between the palazzo and the surrounding landscape.

4. ENTRANCE DRIVE ALLEE
The entrance drives are another formal element from Hunt’s influence on the landscape. The drives approach the forecourt of the palazzo from grand wrought-iron gates on the north and west sides, each is flanked by symmetrical pedestrian walks. Most of the original pin oak allée planting has been lost, but the western drive allée was partially restored based on historical research and working around the service-oriented interventions. This is the only portion that maintains the character of the entrance drive allées.

5. CANOPY OVER LAWN

Much of the north, west, and south sections of the property are dominated by the picturesque canopy tree character, resembling a park-like planting. The canopy is made up of a mix of deciduous trees, including European beech, Norway maple, sweetgum, linden, and others. The ground layer is turf and slopes gently to the southeast.
6. PROTECTED LAWN
The protected lawn character zone is defined as turf areas that are surrounded by trees or structures so therefore are protected from the ocean winds, but do not exhibit characteristics or features of another character zone. In the existing condition, lawn is seemingly a default landscape typology that is established as vegetation dies and character shifts from other zones.

7. PERIMETER PLANTING AND SERPENTINE WALK
The perimeter planting character zone is a remnant of the layered gardens along the serpentine walk during the period of significance. Though our resources indicate that very few, if any, of the existing trees or shrubs are original to the period of significance, the existing evergreen specimens were planted in an effort to maintain the forms of the original design; however, in their current condition the plants are very overgrown and no longer exhibit the garden character. The majority of the shrubs were planted to screen views and maintain the secluded feel from inside the property. The area around the children’s cottage is planted with a garden-like character, though different from the historic layered planting of the serpentine walk.

8. SERVICE AREAS
The final character zone is one of service-oriented functions. The zone directly north of the palazzo has always been used for service, but it has expanded over the years. As the north drive lost the character of the allée, and due to the introduction of signage and lack of other character-defining features, the character has shifted to one of service. The area around the Caretaker’s Cottage also has a service character due to introduced signage and visitor service additions, such as the ticketing booth, marketing tent, restrooms, and vending machines.
LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

Natural Systems and Features

The relatively flat promontory and steep coastal cliffs that characterize the site’s geomorphology are the products of the natural processes that formed the island’s shoreline and oceanfront bluffs. The rocks themselves are 300-million year old sedimentary rocks (black shale and sandstone) that have metamorphosed to create slate and metasandstone. Ochre Point got its name from the ochre colored pigment found in the rock and soil of the area, caused by the presence of iron oxide. Much of this mineral has since been removed or eroded away. ²

Land Use

The Breakers property is primarily in institutional use as a house museum. Some rooms on the third floor of the mansion are reserved by descendants of the Vanderbilt family and serve as a private, part-time residence.

Cultural Traditions

The development of the landscape is influenced by Newport’s local historic preservation movement and its stewardship by the Preservation Society of Newport County. The care and maintenance of the landscape is influenced by the purpose and mission of the organization. Expanding interest and growing visitorship to the site of a diverse patronage has instigated improvement in visitor amenities and interpretation efforts.

² Newport’s Friends of the Waterfront website.
Spatial Organization

The ground plane of the 13-acre site is nearly square in shape and is bordered on three sides – the north, west, and south – by municipal streets. A large stone and iron fence lines the property on these three sides with grand iron gates at the two drive entrances on the west and north sides. The historic Newport Cliff Walk that overlooks the Atlantic Ocean borders the eastern side of the site, but is separated from the property by a steep embankment and chain link fence. The Breakers Palazzo is sited on a diagonal in the center of the property, facing the southeast corner with sweeping views over the Atlantic. It is flanked on the northeast and southwest sides by formal parterre gardens (labeled the north parterre and south parterre, respectively). To the southeast, a large stone terrace on the southeast side that overlooks the ocean, and a forecourt on the northwest side, centered on the porte cochere. These four areas, which were designed in a Beaux Arts tradition and are surrounded by a limestone balustrade, hold the majority of the landscape’s statuary and neoclassical elements. The entrance drives are located in the center of the northern and western boundaries and approach the palazzo on an angle, opening to the forecourt and porte cochere on the northwest side of the mansion. Overhead spatial organization is defined by the historically significant view corridors down both drives to the palazzo, formerly framed by pin oak allées, together with the sweeping panoramic vista on the east side of the site.

The perimeter areas surrounding the house and formal gardens are designed with influences from the picturesque style. On the east side of the house a great open lawn offers unobstructed views of the ocean; the other three sides of the house are planted with canopy trees and a dense perimeter planting along the stone and iron fence for screening. A Serpentine Walk runs along the perimeter of the property, crossing both drives and connecting to the northeast parterre garden on the north side, and to the Cliff Walk on the south end.
Spatial Organization Diagram.
Cluster Arrangement

There are six year-round inhabitable structures on the site and two seasonal enclosures. The Palazzo sits in the center of the lot and the children’s cottage, which predates the palazzo, is located on the north side of the mansion to the east side of the north drive. All other structures are situated near the main gate along the west entrance drive. The Caretaker’s House and underground boiler room, which were both constructed at the same time as the palazzo, are located just north of the west drive by the main gate. Since the transition to a house museum, four service-oriented outbuildings have been added to the site, all in the area surrounding the main gate and Caretaker’s Cottage. A ticket booth, constructed in the late 1960s, sits just south of the main entrance facing the Caretaker’s Cottage. In the 1990s a vending machine shed was built behind the ticketing booth along the stretch of garden path just south of the main entrance; in 2000 a seasonal ticketing and marketing tent, as well as a Porto-o-John trailer were added to the north side of the Caretaker’s House along the Serpentine Walk.
Circulation

The dual entrance drives that approach the house from the West (main) gate on Ochre Point Avenue and the north service gate on Shepard Avenue, converging at the forecourt on the northwest side of the house are a dominant circulation features on the site. The drives are constructed with a layer of stone as a base, covered with a thin binding layer and topped with peastone. The road base, assumed to be original, is repaved periodically with a fresh layer of peastone. The footpaths of the parterre gardens are made of a similar peastone, and were restored in the 1970s. The east terrace and floor of the pergola are constructed of limestone pavers. The stone is worn and chipping in places but is most likely original. In the southwest quadrant two marble step-stone footpaths extend from the stairs of the south parterre garden through the south lawn. They originally connected to the serpentine walk, but some stones have been removed and/or are covered or partially covered with turf. They may have been moved in the 1960s and used to pave the area in front of the ticketing booth along the west entry drive, but further verification is required.

The serpentine walk and footpaths that flank both drives were reconstructed in 1989 or 1990 and paved with chip and seal. At that time, the condition of the original path had greatly deteriorated. The intention was to match the original path alignment, though there are areas where the width of the path was altered and the northeast portion of the serpentine path that connected to the cliff walk was not repaved; the path in that area is barely discernible today. The existing condition of the walks has deteriorated in places and is heavily worn from use. The service entrance from the north drive to the lower level of the north wing was likely repaved, perhaps at the same time as the footpaths. This steep drive is asphalt and the lower service court is paved with asphalt pavers. Possibly also at that time a new segment of chip and seal footpath was added between the forecourt and north service area for visitor access. In 2000 a gravel walk and wood deck were built with the ticketing tent behind the Caretaker’s Cottage. The whole area is lined with metal edging. There is also a small path of concrete in front of the vending machine shed that was installed in the 1980s. The Newport Cliff Walk is constructed mostly of asphalt, but the section directly in front of the Breakers is paved in concrete.
Paving Materials
Buildings and Structures

There are a total of eight buildings and structures on The Breakers site. Four of these are from the period of significance, and four have been constructed since The Breakers opened as a house museum with services for visitors. A description of each building is in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Cottage</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Commissioned by Cornelius Vanderbilt, designed by Peabody &amp; Stearns. Intended as a playhouse for the Vanderbilt children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Breakers Palazzo</td>
<td>1893-1895</td>
<td>Commissioned by Cornelius Vanderbilt, designed by Richard Morris Hunt, as a summer retreat for the Vanderbilt family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiler Room</td>
<td>1893-1895</td>
<td>Commissioned by Cornelius Vanderbilt, designed by Richard Morris Hunt. An underground building to store a furnace for heating The Breakers mansion. The boiler room is connected to the mansion by a tunnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caretaker’s House</td>
<td>1893-1895</td>
<td>Commissioned by Cornelius Vanderbilt and designed by Richard Morris Hunt. The Caretaker’s House is intended as a home for the caretaker of the mansion. It is constructed around the boiler room chimney and a stairwell connects the Caretaker’s house to the underground boiler room as one job for the caretaker was to feed coal into the furnace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket Booth</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Commissioned by PSNC to sell tickets for house museum tours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vending Machine Shelter</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>Commissioned by PSNC to house vending machines as an amenity to visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticketing Tent</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Commissioned by PSNC as a location for informative panels and ticket sales for use during peak season. It was originally intended to be a temporary and seasonal structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portable Restrooms</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Commissioned by PSNC as an amenity for visitors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Breakers Palazzo, 2013

Boiler room, circa 2013. Courtesy PSNC.

Caretaker’s Cottage, 2013

Children’s Cottage, 2013

Ticket Booth, 2013

Vending Machine Shed, 2013

Seasonal Ticketing Tent, 2013

Portable Restrooms, 2013
Topography and Hydrology

The Breakers Palazzo sits in the center of the site and on the east side of the house the lawn slopes to the southeast in a great sweeping landform down to a steep embankment along the cliff walk. Notable landforms include the embankment along the east side of the site that slopes about five feet down to the Cliff Walk which sits on a recessed terrace in an effort to provide privacy and enhance views for occupants of The Breakers. The other side of the walk drops dramatically over the Newport cliffs to the Atlantic Ocean, providing broad, spectacular views from the site over the ocean. The parterre gardens on either side of the house are on raised terraces protected by a balustrade on all sides. The large spaces between the terrace walks are sunken gardens planted with intricate beds of low-growing annuals for bursts of color, a popular feature in neoclassical revival. The sunken topography allows for better viewing of these gardens from the surrounding paths and provides protection from the ocean winds.

On the west side of the house the land continues to rise gradually to a high point in the northwest corner. A depression in the northwest quadrant is a remnant from a lawn tennis court that was installed in the late 1920s or early 1930s. There are also mounding forms between the serpentine path and perimeter fence on the north and south sides. The reason for these is unknown, but could be intended to enhance the screening and secluded feel of the path. There is also a mound in the southwest quadrant near the wellhead; the reason for this is unknown, but is likely a remnant of a former tree. The service entrance on the north side of the house is another notable topographical move, as it slopes steeply down to the basement level of the north wing and is surrounded by large retaining walls.
The water line, sewer line, and drainage system layout and infrastructure are all believed to be original to the 1896 design and installation. A site plan drawing of the drainage, saltwater, and freshwater systems by Bowditch illustrates the original intent. Historic images of the catch basins match the existing along the serpentine walk and both drives, and comparisons to the recent site survey indicate that these systems were well constructed and are still intact today. The section of the serpentine walk along the southern boundary of the site is believed to be the same layout from the 1877 design. It is likely that the catch basins and drainage system in this area also date to that time, rendering them the oldest remaining features on the site. This is supported by historic photographs of the Peabody & Stearns villa, which show historic catch basins that match existing. Additionally, the 1895 “Fresh and Salt Water Supply, Sewer and Drainage Plan” does not show proposed drainage along that section of path, perhaps because the system was already in place.
Vegetation

CANOPY AND SPECIMEN TREES
One of the most prominent features of The Breakers landscape is the collection of large canopy trees. European beech, oak, sweet gum, maple, linden, and others stipple the north, west, and south sides of the property. Pin oaks line the main drive and frame the grand approach to the palazzo. Bartlett Tree Experts has been tracking a complete tree inventory since the 1990s, and as of February 2013 there were 156 trees or tree groupings on the property, 28% of which are in declining health, many as a result of over-maturity. An active tree-replacement strategy is employed to preserve the character of the canopy.

3 Calculated from Table 21 of The Breakers Tree Inventory & Management Plan, 2013.
EVERGREEN STANDS
Along the Serpentine Walk in the northwest quadrant of the property there are four large stands of mixed evergreen trees, including Hinoki and Sawara false cypress, yew, and cryptomeria. There are also two large and quite impressive Blue Atlas Cedars in the northwest quadrant. Other evergreen trees include a group of western red cedar behind the ticketing tent and used for screening, and a group of American holly behind the forecourt balustrade and used for screening of utilities.
SHRUBS AND SCREENING VEGETATION:
The perimeter of the property is planted with dense shrubs to screen views to the street, though there are some gaps where vegetation has died and views are uncontrolled. A large mass of rhododendron maximum lines the west edge of the property south of the drive and along part of the southern edge. Yew is also used for screening under the evergreen tree plantings and in the southwest quadrant. There are also large masses of these shrubs along the east side of the north boundary, and on the west side of the north drive. Many of these shrub masses are severely overgrown and crowd the path, often forcing pedestrians off the pavement. Privet creates a strong screen from both ends of the cliff walk and rugosa rose is used as a low hedge across the middle section of the east boundary. An arcing privet hedge in the southwest quadrant is reminiscent of the planting from the historic photographs. Smaller hedges of yew line the newer paths to the ticket booth and marketing tent, and the paths around the children’s cottage and service drive.
VINES AND GROUNDCOVER VEGETATION:

The majority of groundcover on the property is lawn, most notably the great lawn on the east side of the Palazzo overlooking the ocean. Both the north and south parterre gardens have low annual carpet bedding plantings in sunken gardens. Vines grow on patinated copper trellises on the south parterre trellis. Ivy is limited to the outside of the balustrade where it thrives. Around the children's cottage clematis vines growing on a wire trellis and a bed of annuals line the perimeter. On the north side of the forecourt, pachysandra fills in the areas between the walkway and balustrade. Shady areas are predominantly covered in mulch, moss, or bare earth.
Views and Vistas

One of the most significant aspects of The Breakers is the magnificent view from the palazzo overlooking the ocean; the topography and open planting strategy on the east side were both designed to accentuate this view. There are a number of other key views around the site as well, with glimpses of the ocean and the house from the garden path, and views of the house from the main entry drive and the great lawn. In addition to the historic views and vistas, there are also several views through gaps in perimeter screening vegetation. These occur particularly along the north and south edges of the site. Similarly, there are other areas where overgrown vegetation has obstructed and limited intentionally designed views.
There are also several prominent views from inside the palazzo out to the landscape. Cornelius Vanderbilt's bedroom is on the southwest corner of the house with a view from his window down the driveway to the main gate. Gladys Vanderbilt's bedroom was directly over the pergola on the south end of the palazzo where she overlooked the south parterre and south lawn. From the duel loggia on the main and upper floor there is a spectacular panorama of the great lawn and Atlantic Ocean. From the dining room in the northeast corner, the windows overlook the north parterre garden with the ocean as a backdrop.
Significant views from the outside the property walls include those down both driveways to the palazzo. One can also catch glimpses of The Breakers from the cliff walk, and the embankment along the walk directly in front of the house is deeply worn by cliff walk patrons climbing up for a better view. Additionally, there are several locations along the perimeter streets where passersby can peek into the property; most of these are unintentional views through gaps in vegetation.
**Constructed Water Features and Small-Scale Site Features**

There are several site features, including ironwork, statuaries, fountains, stone sculptures, and follies around the site of The Breakers. Most are located on the formal areas adjacent to the house. The following table and diagrams list the major features of the site. A complete inventory of all outdoor sculptural elements was performed concurrently with this report for which all outdoor statuary, urns, and fountain features were cleaned followed by a conditions assessment with recommendations for repairs. Conservator Patricia Miller performed the work and the complete inventory can be found in her report *The Breakers Outdoor Sculpture Conservation Project*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ironwork</td>
<td>Decorative metal elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statuaries</td>
<td>Figurines and sculptures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fountains</td>
<td>Water features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Sculptures</td>
<td>Carved stone elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follies</td>
<td>Ornamental structures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Site Features of The Breakers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Iron Gate</td>
<td>West Entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Iron Gate</td>
<td>North Entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limestone and Iron Fence</td>
<td>North, West, and South Perimeter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Column</td>
<td>Northwest Quadrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Wellhead</td>
<td>Southwest Quadrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal Chute Metal Panel</td>
<td>Sidewalk of Ochre Point Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limestone Balustrade</td>
<td>Forecourt, South Parterre, East Terrace, North Parterre,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronze Lamp Posts (4)</td>
<td>Forecourt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fountain</td>
<td>Forecourt, central oval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Floral Sculptures (5)</td>
<td>Forecourt, on balustrade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Finials (3)</td>
<td>Forecourt, on corners of balustrade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Figure</td>
<td>Forecourt, porte-cochère</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lion Statue</td>
<td>Forecourt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Gate</td>
<td>South Parterre, forecourt entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Sundial</td>
<td>South Parterre, east lawn panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Elephant Statue</td>
<td>South Parterre, west lawn panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fountain</td>
<td>South Parterre, central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Benches (5)</td>
<td>South Parterre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Finial Sculptures (2)</td>
<td>South Parterre, steps to pergola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copper Trellis (6)</td>
<td>South Parterre, pergola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Urns (2)</td>
<td>East terrace, on balustrade, central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Finial Sculptures (7)</td>
<td>East terrace, on balustrade, at steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolphin basin</td>
<td>East terrace, centered on lawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fountain</td>
<td>North Parterre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Gate</td>
<td>North Parterre, serpentine walk entrance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Site Features - Parterre Detail. Note change in orientation.
Several types of vertical walls and fences define spaces across the site. A limestone and wrought iron fence surrounds the property on three sides. A limestone balustrade surrounds the Beaux-Arts landscape rooms in the central part of the property. Granite curbs of rounded stone with undercut storm drain details and spherical guardstones line the drives and flanking walks. Retaining walls are used along the cliff walk, as well as around the service entry drive. A tall chain link fence separates the privately maintained part of The Breakers property from the public Cliff Walk. Metal edging lines the walkways throughout the parterre gardens and along the serpentine walk between the northern parterre garden and the children’s cottage. Post and chain fences discourage foot traffic over the grass medians along the west entry drive and along the serpentine walk near the children’s cottage.
EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

National Register Status
The architectural and historical significance of The Breakers has been recognized over time by several landmark and historic district designations. The Breakers was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on September 10, 1971, and designated a National Historic Landmark on October 12, 1994. The Breakers qualified as a National Historic Landmark under Criterion 2, for properties that are associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States, and under Criterion 4, for properties that embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type exceptionally valuable for a study of a period, style, or method of construction or that represent a significant, distinctive and exceptional entity whose components may lack individual distinction. The National Historic Landmark period of significance was defined as 1893-1899. The Breakers is also a contributing building within the Ochre Point-Cliffs Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

While the existing National Historic Landmark nomination form for The Breakers acknowledges that the landscape design was an integral component of the concept and vision of The Breakers as realized by owner Cornelius Vanderbilt, architect Richard Morris Hunt, and landscape designer Ernest W. Bowditch, the documentation does not provide a comprehensive analysis of the history, condition, and significance of The Breakers' landscape character or of the site itself. This Cultural Landscape Report is intended to create a more substantial record of the designed historic landscape associated with The Breakers by filling in the gaps left by previous documentation and broadening the current understanding of the significance of The Breakers as it has been previously documented and recorded.

Landscape Classification
For the purpose of this report, The Breakers’ site is defined as a “historic designed landscape.” The National Park Service’s Cultural Resource Management Guideline describes a historic designed landscape as “significant as a design or work of art; consciously designed and laid out by a master gardener, landscape architect, architect or horticulturist according to design principles, or an owner or amateur using a recognized style or tradition; associated with a significant person, trend, or event in landscape gardening; or having a significant relationship to the theory or practice of landscape architecture.”¹ (Besides the historic designed landscape, other landscape classifications are the historic vernacular landscape, the historic site, and the ethnographic landscape.)

Statement of Significance

The gardens and grounds of The Breakers, comprising a 13-acre parcel along Newport’s eastern shore overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, possess local and national significance. The landscape was designed and initially implemented in conjunction with the design and construction of the Richard Morris Hunt palazzo between 1893 and 1896 and under the patronage of Cornelius Vanderbilt II, a key figure in American history. The formative period of landscape development continued after Cornelius Vanderbilt’s death in 1899, during which time Alice Vanderbilt stewarded the landscape and oversaw the maturation of the design intent until her death in 1934, up to 1938 when the site was struck by a devastating hurricane. From 1893 to 1938, a period of flourish in the cultural arts of America as well as rapid change and great social unrest, the landscape design and evolution reflected nineteenth- and twentieth-century traditions in American landscape design and horticultural trends that combined picturesque park elements with rational, classically inspired features of Beaux Arts influence and herbaceous planting strategies of the Victorian era. The landscape was developed during Newport’s heyday as the social capital of America and was considered an important visual symbol of the Vanderbilt family’s preeminence during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A consciously designed residential landscape laid out by skilled and proficient professionals according to recognized styles and traditions, The Breakers embodies the splendor and wealth that epitomized America’s Gilded Age.

The historic landscape of The Breakers embodies the work of two well-established, nationally recognized, masters in their fields – landscape designer Ernest W. Bowditch and architect Richard Morris Hunt. Over the course of his career, Bowditch was recognized as a prominent leader in his field. His landscape design practice included land surveying, sewer and water supply engineering, cemetery and park plans, subdivision layout, and residential design. Although his reputation is somewhat overshadowed today by the work of his contemporaries, Bowditch left an important legacy. Richard Morris Hunt was one of the most celebrated architects of his day. Known as the “dean of American architecture,” Hunt played a key role in the professionalization of the architectural field and the development of architectural education in the United States. The development of The Breakers’ landscape was also shaped by the important contributions of forester James H. Bowditch and estate gardeners Richard Gardner, Robert Laurie, Frederic Carter, and William “Billy” Murphy, who planted rare, imported specimen trees, cultivated exotic plant species, and encouraged horticultural experimentation.

Period of Significance

The National Register defines a period of significance as “the length of time when a property was associated with important events, activities, or persons or attained the characteristics which qualify it for National Register listing.”\(^2\) Based on careful analysis of the landscape history and historic context of the site, the period of significance of The Breakers’ landscape is defined as 1893 to 1938. The year that the construction of The Breakers

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The Breakers Cultural Landscape Report

Reed Hilderbrand
Robinson & Associates

185

palazzo begins forms the beginning of the period of significance. This year also marks the beginning of the site's design by architect Richard Morris Hunt and continued efforts of development by landscape designer Ernest W. Bowditch and owner Cornelius Vanderbilt II. After the untimely death of Cornelius Vanderbilt in 1899, the landscape continued to mature, guided by Vanderbilt's initial plans with Bowditch and Hunt, under the care and direction of skilled landscape professionals and the stewardship of landowners Alice Vanderbilt and Gladys Moore Vanderbilt Széchényi. The end date of the period of significance is 1938, the year a severe hurricane struck the New England coast and caused significant damage to The Breakers' landscape. Although efforts were made to replant and restore the grounds and gardens following the hurricane, research to date indicates that the year 1938 represents an important milestone in the landscape development of The Breakers when conditions and maintenance began to decline and when its occupancy by the Vanderbilt family grew infrequent. The period of significance captures the era of Cornelius Vanderbilt II and Alice Vanderbilt, the property's original patrons and primary occupants, and represents the period in which the land was shaped by its principal designers Ernest W. Bowditch and Richard Morris Hunt.

The period of significance 1893 to 1938 captures the most important phase in the development of the landscape as it was intended to reflect the design principles and enhance the architecture of The Breakers. As it comprises a longer period of years, the period of significance of the landscape as defined in this report does not directly parallel the period of significance identified for the building in its National Historic Landmark nomination. As stated above, the primary focus of the National Historic Landmark nomination is the structure and its occupants. Thus, the National Historic Landmark nomination defines The Breakers' period of significance as 1893-1899. This period reflects the most important phase in the development of the building, not the historic landscape, and the disparate dates simply reflect the distinctive criteria with which the historic landscape and the historic building were evaluated.

It was during the period of significance 1893 to 1938 that the underlying landscape design and associated features that would characterize the site over the course of its history were established. The landscape was designed with a combination of naturalistic, picturesque elements and formal, classically inspired components shaped by the Beaux Arts rationalism of Richard Morris Hunt’s palazzo design. The Breakers was constructed as a monumental residential edifice, set back from the perimeter streets and the seaside cliffs. The landscape served as a formal visual setting for the house, as a buffer zone between the residences, and as an informal park-like space for recreation, socialization, and the enjoyment of horticultural pleasures. The formal entrance drives, the recreational footpaths including the serpentine walk and Cliff Walk, functional access paths, and perimeter streets defined the circulation system. Vegetation included the spacious turf lawn east and south of the house; formally planted elements that enhanced the geometry and symmetry of the architecture; informal, arboreal plantings including rare specimen trees; and carefully articulated arrangements of flower beds, perennials, and
herbaceous shrubs that complemented the gentle curves of the serpentine walk. The topography of the site sloped gently in a sweeping gesture from the palazzo to the seaside bluffs, with a precipitous drop off along the eastern cliffs. The Cliff Walk along the eastern edge of the property was recessed on a narrow terrace set at a lower elevation than the turf lawn, providing privacy and highlighting views from the house and grounds. The landscape was designed to enhance views and vistas from the site, providing clear, panoramic views of the ocean from the terraces and to offer a long meandering footpath at the site’s perimeter, known as the serpentine walk. The entrance composition – including the majestic Ochre Point gates, formal west entry drive, and pin oak allée – presented a clear vista through the landscape, framing and displaying the palazzo to its fullest advantage. The landscape characteristics described above – related to circulation, topography, vegetation, visual quality, spatial organization, and setting – were defined and fully conceived during the period of significance. The period plan that depicts the years 1893 to 1938 reflects the current understanding of the site conditions as they existed during the period of significance.

EVALUATION OF INTEGRITY

The Breakers’ site has evolved over time, but over the years these changes have not compromised the core landscape design as it was defined during the period of significance 1893 to 1938. Integrity relates to the degree to which the characteristics that define a landscape’s historical significance are present. A comparative study of the historic and contemporary conditions associated with The Breakers’ site indicates that the landscape as a whole retains a moderate degree of integrity, with the integrity of specific aspects of the landscape ranging from low to high. The seven aspects of historic integrity, as established for the National Register of Historic Places, include location, setting, design, material, workmanship, feeling, and association. The following summary considers these criteria for The Breakers’ landscape.

Location and Setting

The location and setting of The Breakers was established under Pierre Lorillard IV and continued unaltered through its acquisition by Cornelius Vanderbilt II and through its occupation by Vanderbilt and his descendents during the period of significance. The site still retains its intended prominence on Newport’s exclusive Ochre Point and maintains views east and south to the Atlantic Ocean. Its boundaries continue to be defined by municipal streets and ocean-side cliffs. The site retains its residential character despite the change in use from a private residence to a historic house museum and the addition of service-oriented structures around the caretaker’s cottage. The residential setting of The Breakers, however, has been altered due to the conversion of several surrounding properties on Ochre Point from residential to institutional for use by Salve Regina University, the addition of parking areas on adjacent lots and along Shepard Avenue, and increased traffic on all adjacent streets. Due to alterations and changes to the character of surrounding lots and the residential setting of Ochre Point, the location and setting of The Breakers retains a moderate level of integrity.
Design

During the period of significance, the site was designed and implemented by a team of nationally and locally recognized professionals that included Ernest W. Bowditch, Richard Morris Hunt, James H. Bowditch, and head gardeners Richard Gardner, Robert Laurie, Frederic Carter, and William “Billy” Murphy. The design represents a combination of the picturesque and Beaux Arts landscape with elements of the Victorian era. It incorporates an assemblage of romantic features such as the serpentine walk and lawns with naturally located specimen trees comingled with formal, classically-inspired components, including the terrace parterres, entrance allées, and garden ornaments as well as colorful gardenesque plantings along the serpentine walk.

Because of the complexity and layering of the landscape, the design integrity is evaluated by character zone. Character zones are areas of the overall landscape composition where features of a landscape coalesce to define a discreet spatial unit of character. The eight existing character zones that comprise The Breakers property today include: the east lawn, the Newport Cliff Walk, Beaux Arts landscape areas, entrance drives, canopy tree areas, protected lawn, perimeter planting and serpentine walk, and service areas.

EAST LAWN

The primary sweep of the east lawn remains intact as originally designed, as it maintains the broad, mounding topography that slopes to the bluff and the significant views of the palazzo and ocean. The low shrubs along the east edge of the lawn are consistent with the period of significance; however, the pair of evergreen clusters that once framed the view from the palazzo are no longer in evidence. With the exception of these masses, the east lawn character zone maintains a high level of integrity.

NEWPORT CLIFF WALK

The Newport Cliff Walk terrace and path make up a distinct zone, characterized by the continuous circulation route, the panoramic views of the ocean and the house, the dramatic landform of the cliffs, and the embankment on the inland side of the path. Despite some changes to paving material, the addition of a chain link fence for security purposes, and additional planting along the embankment, the Newport Cliff Walk character zone holds a high level of integrity.

BEAUX ARTS LANDSCAPE AREAS

The classical elements that comprise Hunt’s Beaux Arts landscape areas adjacent to the palazzo make up the third character zone, which includes the north and south parterre gardens and terraces, the forecourt, and the east terrace. The structural and spatial elements of the terrace garden rooms are all intact, and the circulation layout is original. The panoramic vistas from the terraces across the east lawn are mostly intact, though there are some obstructions from overgrown shrubs on the south parterre. Vines on the South Terrace pergola and shrub
plantings in the lawn panels represent species and locations from the period of significance. The original parterre beds of the South Terrace are no longer extant, but the existing design reflects a pattern typical of the period and the sunken beds and inclined banks from the period of significance remain. Similarly, while the rose garden of the North Terrace is no longer evident, the sunken beds and inclined banks from the period of significance remain. The row of beech trees that once lined the west side of the North Terrace is no longer extant. A number of fountains and small-scale features populate the terraces and contribute to the integrity of this character zone, though a more thorough evaluation of these features and the limestone balustrade by a masonry conservator is recommended. The overall integrity of the Beaux Arts landscape areas is high.

ENTRANCE DRIVES
The entrance drives to Ochre Point Avenue and Shepard Avenue maintain the original circulation composition, with the exception of some additional paths on the north side of the forecourt that were installed for visitor access. The paving materials of the drives, the granite curbs and spherical guard stones, and the drainage grates are all original. The wrought iron gates are original and have recently been restored to remove rust and replace lost decorative elements. The cluster arrangement of buildings along the entrance drives has been modified by the addition of the ticket booth, but the contributing features – the caretaker’s cottage and children’s cottage – are still present. There have been alterations to the spatial organization and views along the drives, as the allées that once lined the drives have been reduced and therefore no longer frame views to the house or create vertical and overhead planes. The pin oak allée along the Ochre Point Avenue entrance drive was replanted following the original layout as accurately as possible given existing conditions, such as the ticket booth, which limited the extent of the restoration. Along the north drive, only one specimen remains as evidence of the former allée. The row of potted trees and catalpa standards that occupied the lawn panels between the drives and flanking walks are no longer extant. Due to the diminished vegetation and those impacts on the views and spatial organization of the character zone, the entrance drives have a moderate to high degree of integrity.

CANOPY TREES
While the spatial organization of the canopy tree character zone has lost clarity over the years due to changes in location and density, an active tree management and replacement program has retained a sense of the original intent. Tree selection has aimed to restore a canopy of species consistent with, or at least probable for, the period of significance. Some specimens survive from the period of significance, though they are reaching the extent of their life expectancy and many are in decline. Topographically, the only notable feature is an embankment in the northwest quadrant that is a remnant from a lawn tennis court. The exact dates of the court are unknown, but it was likely constructed sometime in the late 1920s or early 1930s for Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi and her husband, Count Laszlo Széchényi, who were both avid tennis players. Though the lawn tennis court was installed during the period of significance, it is no longer extant and therefore noncontributing. Due to
comprehensive species diversity yet slight obscurity of the spatial composition for this character zone, the integrity is rated as moderate to high.
PROTECTED LAWN

The protected south lawn was conceived as an extension of the south parterre garden and a transitional zone from the formal design of the terraces to the organic forms of the perimeter areas. It also served as a backdrop for views from the interior spaces on the main floor and from Alice Vanderbilt's bedroom on the second floor of the palazzo. The spatial organization of the zone, which was once a roughly oval-shaped lawn bordered by canopy trees and the outer wall of the limestone balustrade, is now obscured by a lack of form in the canopy tree planting. The intentionally framed ocean view has also been altered as a result of vegetation loss. Circulation through this zone consists of two paths of marble pavers set in grass. Portions of each path still exist, yet they no longer continue to the serpentine perimeter walk. The integrity for this character zone is classified as moderate.

PERIMETER PLANTING AND SERPENTINE WALK

The perimeter planting and serpentine walk character zone runs along the north, west, and south sides of the property and includes the stone and iron fence, perimeter plantings, and the serpentine walk. Spatial organization of the perimeter zone includes a wall of dense evergreen planting for screening purposes along the western edge of the property and in portions of the north and south borders. The north and south edges also have areas in which the planting is diminished and the only vertical plane is the stone and iron fence. Other areas along the perimeter path are spatially enclosed and dark as a result of drastically overgrown and tightly planted evergreen trees. Along the serpentine path the views are uncontrolled and haphazard; this contrasts with the highly ordered cinematic experience from the period of significance with framed views and intentional glimpses of the palazzo, ocean, garden ornaments, or path ahead. Circulation in this zone is comprised of the serpentine path. With the exception of the northeast link to the Cliff Walk, which no longer exists, the course of the serpentine path reflects its original design, though there have been changes in width and material. The two small-scale features of this zone, the stone column and wellhead, remain intact and in their original locations. The vegetation of this zone has changed considerably from that of the period of significance. Although many of the Sawara and Hinoki false cypress, yews, Japanese cedars, and Japanese cryptomeria that border the path may be similar in species and location to those from the period of significance, evidence from aerial photographs and tree core samples show that they are not original specimens. They also no longer retain the character from the period, as they were originally planted as shrubs and were intended as low borders. Today this vegetation is overgrown and incomplete so the design intent of this plant material is lost. The other vegetation feature, the herbaceous layer that bordered the serpentine walk at the turn of the century and is evident, though in a different form, in the 1914 photographs is no longer extant. It is expected that this feature would evolve throughout the period of significance as light conditions changed to a maturing canopy, but it is safe to assume that some aspect of this herbaceous layer remained throughout the period. It was likely managed by the gardener and possibly changed several times, similar to the floral beds in the parterre gardens. The cluster arrangement in this zone is another significantly altered landscape characteristic as all service-oriented additions were crowded into
the areas along the path directly north and south of the main entry. The caretaker’s cottage and children’s cottage, as mentioned in the description of the entry drives, are intact, yet the garden settings that once enveloped the buildings are lost. The underground boiler room is also still intact and the coal chute still exists in the sidewalk along Ochre Point Avenue, but the skylights are no longer visible from above grade. Due to the changes in vegetation, views, spatial organization, and cluster arrangement, the integrity of the perimeter planting and serpentine path character zone is low.

SERVICE AREAS
The service area character zone is on the north side of the house and connects to the north drive. The topography is the most prominent characteristic of this zone, as it is a dramatic depression in the ground to the lower floor of the palazzo and is surrounded by retaining walls. The most important vista as a feature of this zone is actually that from the north drive over the service area to the north parterre garden and ocean beyond. The vista is maintained by the low topography that keeps the service area hidden and out of sight. The service drive is lined with a noncontributing yew hedge, which helps provide an additional visual buffer for the drive. Early photographs of this area show a dense mix of shrub and tree plantings, similar in character to that along the perimeter of the property and used for screening purposes. There was likely a service area north of the caretaker’s cottage during the period of significance, as this is the location of the underground boiler room and there was probably some service associated with the structure and its occupants. Today, there is very little evidence remaining of the historic service character in this area. Existing service-oriented additions, including the ticketing booth and tent, vending machines, and restroom facilities, have blurred the boundaries of this character zone. Due to changes to the historic character of the service areas and the resulting impact on adjacent character zones, the integrity of this zone is low to moderate.
Materials

The materials that comprised the landscape during the period of significance exist to a varying degree. Vegetative materials used to implement the landscape design included grass, annuals, perennials, small shrubs, and specimen trees. While a few specimen trees from the period of significance still survive, most of them are in decline and nearing the end of their life expectancy. While much original plant material has been lost, other materials have been replaced in kind or replaced with different material. However, the materiality of the original planting is much simplified from the highly ordered and layered complexity of the period of significance. The integrity of the vegetative material that remains from the period of significance is low. Paving materials include the asphalt drives and footpaths, granite curbing and guard stones, the asphalt perimeter path, marble paver footpaths, gravel footpaths of the parterre gardens, and limestone paving on the east terrace. With the exception of the serpentine path, the materials used for circulation maintain a moderate level of integrity, though the condition of some of these elements has deteriorated. Materials of garden features include the stone and iron fence and gates, stone statuary, fountains and garden ornaments, and the limestone balustrades. The materials of the garden features maintain a moderate to high level of integrity, though the condition of these features should be evaluated further.

Workmanship

Workmanship is defined as the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. The workmanship associated with the site is most evident in the stone and cast-iron fence and gates, the stonework of the various statuary features, fountains, and balustrade, and the woodcarvings in the pillars of the children's cottage, among several other architectural elements. The existing evidence of workmanship on the site retains a high degree of integrity.

Feeling and Association

Feeling is defined as a cultural landscape's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. While The Breakers' landscape continues to reflect the picturesque and Beaux Arts aesthetics that were developed during the period of significance, the historic sense of the landscape as the private gardens and grounds of the Vanderbilt family maintained by talented teams of skilled and knowledgeable gardeners is somewhat diminished due to significantly less resources in terms of available labor and funds than during the Vanderbilt era. However, the site's operation as a historic house museum perpetuates the overall historic sense of a Gilded Age residential landscape. Thus, The Breakers' landscape has a moderate level of integrity relative to its aesthetic and historic feeling.

Association is the direct link between the important historic event or person and a cultural landscape. Due to its ongoing use as a historic house museum focused on interpreting the Vanderbilt family's development and
occupancy of The Breakers, with specific focus on the architectural and landscape significance of the property, the association between The Breakers’ landscape and the people that make the site historic is strong. Thus, The Breakers’ landscape has a high level of integrity related to its historic association.

Summary of Integrity
The historic integrity of a cultural landscape is related to the ability of the landscape to convey its significance authentically. Despite the loss of integrity of the contextual setting and some major elements of the design, other aspects – landscape materials, surviving design elements, workmanship, and overall feelings and associations – communicate the historic intent of the landscape designers, periods of influence, and design styles. The Breakers retains numerous authentic features from the period of significance and overall retains a moderate degree of integrity.
Character Zones from the Period of Significance
Existing Character Zones
Character-defining Features

The following list identifies the important physical features, visual aspects, and spatial qualities of the landscape that define its essential character and reflect its appearance during the period of significance. These character-defining features are drawn from the following landscape characteristics: natural systems and features, spatial organization, land use, cultural traditions, cluster arrangement, circulation, topography, vegetation, buildings and structures, views and vistas, constructed water features, small-scale features, and archaeological sites. This list identifies the features of the The Breakers’ landscape that, if lost or altered, would diminish the historic significance of the resource.

NATURAL SYSTEMS AND FEATURES

- steep coastal cliffs
- sloping promontory

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

- definition of the ground plane by the rectilinear grid of the municipal perimeter roads; the naturalistic course of the Cliff Walk; circulation features including the formal entrance drive and serpentine walk; and topographic features such as the flat lawn, the Cliff Walk terrace, and the ocean cliffs
- definition of the vertical plane by the massing of the house in the approximate center of the site; the massing of the caretaker’s cottage; the massing of the children’s cottage; the perimeter fence and gates; the perimeter of vegetation; the specimen trees within the northwest quadrant and on the lawn south of the house; and the restored allée of trees along the west entry drive
- definition of the overhead plane by views and vistas (see below)

CLUSTER ARRANGEMENT

- location of house in the approximate center of the site and facing southeast
- location of caretaker’s cottage on the western edge of the grounds along the Ochre Point Avenue entrance drive
- location of the underground boiler room north of the caretaker’s cottage
- location of children’s cottage north of the house along the entrance drive

CIRCULATION

- location on site and general course of the Cliff Walk (width and paving materials are noncontributing)
- entrance drive (including its linear, symmetrical arrangement, width, and paving material)
- entrance forecourt
- three-quarter round stone curbing
- rounded bollards or guard stones
- remaining course of the serpentine walk (its width and paving material are noncontributing)
• serpentine walk spur to the North Terrace (its width and paving materials are noncontributing)
• linear, symmetrical layout and remaining square marble pavers of the two informal footpaths south of the South Parterre
• location and course of sidewalks flanking the entrance drive (paving material is noncontributing)
• location and course of path accessing the front entrance of the caretaker’s cottage (width and paving material are noncontributing)
• service drive extending from the entrance drive to the north service wing

TOPOGRAPHY AND HYDROLOGY
• southeast sloping topography across majority of site
• Cliff Walk terrace
• drainage system
• landform of parterre gardens

VEGETATION
• open turf lawn generally east and south of the house
• Rosa rugosa and privet hedges along the eastern edge of the property
• hydrangea along the southeastern edge of the property
• yews on the east lawn at the base of the terrace walls and steps
• specimen trees, weeping European beeches, copper beeches, others
• vines on pergola on South Terrace
• ivy covering the outer walls of balustrade
• restored pin oak allée along Ochre Point Avenue entrance drive/west entry drive
• remaining pin oak by Shepard Avenue entrance drive/north drive
• lawn panels flanking the entrance drives

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES
• Richard Morris Hunt palazzo (1893-95)
• Richard Morris Hunt caretaker’s cottage (1893-95)
• Peabody & Stearns children’s cottage
• Richard Morris Hunt boiler room (1893-1895)

VIEWS AND VISTAS
• panoramic views generally east and southeast from the house and terraces to the water
• views of the house from the entrance gates
• views of the house and ocean from the children’s cottage
• periodic views of the house and children’s cottage from the Cliff Walk
• views from the Cliff Walk to the water
remaining periodic views of the house, children's cottage, grounds, garden embellishments, and ocean from various points along the serpentine walk

CONSTRUCTED WATER FEATURES

- decorative stone fountain at the northeast corner of the East Terrace
- decorative stone fountain in the middle of the south edge of the South Parterre
- decorative stone fountain within the turf panel of the forecourt
- dolphin fountain

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

- carved urns
- stone statuary
- fountain basins
- sundial
- stone benches on terraces
- stone wellhead
- carved stone column
- perimeter fence and gates
- bronze lamp posts (4)
- coal chute hatch door in the Ochre Point Avenue sidewalk
- drainage grates
- stone curbing
- stone bollards or guard stones

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

- none
PART II: TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Management Philosophy
The Breakers is an important cultural resource by association with significant people in American history, as an artifact of a layering of architectural and landscape design traditions during a time of transition in both disciplines, and as a symbol of the opulent lifestyle embodying Newport in the Gilded Age. Under current management by The Preservation Society of Newport County (PSNC) The Breakers is managed as a museum with two primary objectives: to preserve the cultural resource as a significant contributor of American history; and to provide access and interpretation for the public to observe, learn, and enjoy the resource in a financially viable way. The two objectives are mutually compatible and both promote sustainable stewardship of the property and the preservation of landscape features.

The purpose of a Cultural Landscape Report Part II is to identify a primary treatment for the landscape to guide the long-term management of the property that supports the objectives and needs of the institution. The appropriate treatment for the site is determined by carefully weighing several factors, including qualities relating to the resource itself, management needs and goals, and realistic operational restrictions. All factors must be taken into account to preserve the cultural resource in a way that can be sustained. Part I of this report covered many of the resource-based factors used to determine treatment such as existing conditions, significance, overall integrity of the site as well as that of individual features, and available documentation. The management objectives of PSNC is to run The Breakers as a house museum, preserving the historic character of the site for educational and interpretative purposes while also meeting the needs of the visitor and accommodating ticket sales that sustain the property and the nonprofit. Several operational factors also impact the treatment of the cultural resource, such as the health and safety of employees and patrons; resource threats and conflicts, especially those related to the architecture; and budget and labor restrictions. All of these factors were considered in determining the recommended primary treatment for the landscape.

Treatment Definitions
The National Park Service identifies four possible treatments for cultural landscapes: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. Each is described below, as defined by The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes. A cultural landscape report identifies one primary treatment for the site that will guide the long-term management of the overall landscape. Specific character zones and discrete features within the greater landscape may have different treatments as appropriate for the individual area or feature.
Preservation: the act or process of applying measure necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and material of a historic property. Includes initial stabilization work, where necessary, as well as ongoing preservation maintenance and repair of historic materials and features.

Rehabilitation: the act of process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Restoration: the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by removing features from other periods in its history and reconstructing missing features from the restoration period.

Reconstruction: the act of process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a on-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

Determining Treatment
The primary treatment for The Breakers landscape is rehabilitation, with the intention of reflecting the form, features, and character of the property as it appeared during the period of significance, 1893-1938. Rehabilitation is the appropriate treatment because the overall integrity of the site is moderate; there is an ample amount of documentation across much, but not all, of the site; and the management objectives of the Preservation Society are to reestablish the character of the landscape in keeping with that of the period of significance, though contemporary needs of the museum require some alterations to the original landscape.

Throughout the period of significance the property was owned and operated by one of the wealthiest families in America at the time, and was used as a pleasure ground for private events. The use today is considerably different, with over four hundred thousand visitors on an annual basis, and there exists only a fraction of the relative budget. Public use of any historic landscape inherently implies modifications to accommodate for the health and safety of visitors, necessary amenities, and code requirements. Due to the radically different operational needs, resources, and use requirements some changes to the historic landscape are appropriate. Additionally, the integrity is not uniform across the site as some features of the landscape were removed or altered due to natural events, decreasing resources, contemporary needs, or threats to the architectural resource such as trees of declining health in close proximity to the palazzo. Available documentation of these missing features also varies across the site; while some could be reconstructed rather accurately based on historic documentation, other features have virtually no evidence of the original condition.
As is typical with sites of this complexity, the treatment recommendations are broken down and described by landscape areas that, considered altogether, comprise the designed composition. In this report, the recommended treatment is divided into the eight character zones defined in Part I. One of the four treatment recommendations is identified for each character zone as appropriate for the integrity of existing conditions, available documentation, management requirements and contemporary needs of the zone. Moreover, the financial nature of a non-profit organization like the PSNC is one dependent on intermittent fundraising efforts and donations to fund large projects, rendering an immediate whole-site preservation project impractical. By describing the landscape treatment by character zone, it can easily be divided into distinct projects, thus aiding the phasing, fundraising, design and implementation of the work. The treatment recommendations of this report are based on a phased approach that can be executed through isolated projects, as funds are available. Though specific zones will have different treatment recommendations, they all fit under the primary site-wide treatment of rehabilitation.

The treatment of specific features within each zone is informed by the preservation treatment determined for each zone, and is described through one of the following actions: protect and maintain, repair, replace, design for missing features, and design compatible alterations and additions. These treatment actions are listed in order of increasing levels of intervention. Priority of treatment action is placed on the lowest level of intervention where appropriate, moving to greater levels as needed. Zones for which the recommended treatment is preservation will almost exclusively advocate to protect and maintain features. A restoration will typically contain features with recommended treatment actions to repair or replace. Zones allocated for rehabilitation or reconstruction may require design for missing features or design for compatible alterations and additions.

SITE-WIDE PRIMARY TREATMENT
RESTORATION, PRESERVATION, REHABILITATION, RECONSTRUCTION

SECONDARY TREATMENT BY CHARACTER ZONE
RESTORATION, PRESERVATION, REHABILITATION, RECONSTRUCTION

TREATMENT ACTIONS OF SITE FEATURES
PROTECT AND MAINTAIN
REPAIR
REPLACE
DESIGN FOR MISSING FEATURES
DESIGN COMPATIBLE ALTERATIONS OR ADDITIONS
Guiding Principles for the Long-Term Preservation of The Breakers Landscape

Below is a list of the overarching principles that inform the treatment recommendations for each character zone and the treatment actions for individual features. The guiding principles are based on the operational goals of the organization, contemporary needs, availability of resources, and the integrity of existing conditions.

Rehabilitate the design, character and feeling of the landscape to that of the period of significance, 1893-1938.

Protect and maintain historic features that continue to contribute to the intended character of the site.

Repair or replace in-kind features of which the condition has deteriorated to the point of no longer contributing to the intended character of the landscape.

Utilize a phased removal approach for features that do not contribute nor distract from the intended character of the site but also hold intrinsic value, such as large but non-contributing vegetation.

Design for missing features or design compatible alterations and additions for features that are no longer extant from the period of significance. Allow for alterations and additions to the historic landscape due to limited documentation of the historic condition, significantly different operational needs and restrictions, and for features that pose a threat to the architecture.

Use a phased approach to adjust with availability of funds. Identify distinct projects across varying levels of contribution that can be implemented on an individual basis, or grouped as a capital project.
Treatment By Character Zone
The formal Beaux Arts landscape areas around the palazzo, comprised of the north and south parterre gardens, the forecourt, and the east terrace, are determined to have high integrity. The recommended treatment is restoration, but due to necessary revisions to the original design for the purpose of preserving the condition of the palazzo some modification to specific vegetation features is recommended. Preservation is recommended for the open lawn area, which has high integrity. Restoration is recommended for the canopy, allée and protected lawn areas, which have a moderate level of integrity. The zone that encompasses the serpentine walk and perimeter vegetation has low integrity because there is relatively little surviving evidence of the original design for this area and, in certain areas, little or no documentation, and so rehabilitation is the recommended treatment. The Newport Cliff Walk is not within the scope of treatment recommendations, as it is a public right-of-way on the property and so it is maintained by a separate entity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Réhabilitation</th>
<th>CANOPY</th>
<th>Drive Allees</th>
<th>Beaux Arts Landscape Areas</th>
<th>Protected Lawn</th>
<th>Open Lawn</th>
<th>Serpentine Walk</th>
<th>Service Areas</th>
<th>Newport Cliff Walk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Révision</strong></td>
<td>Protect and Maintain lawn according to Turf Care Management Plan</td>
<td>Protect and Maintain lawn according to Turf Care Management Plan</td>
<td>Protect and Maintain path structure</td>
<td>Protect and Maintain lawn according to Turf Care Management Plan</td>
<td>Protect and Maintain lawn according to Turf Care Management Plan</td>
<td>Protect and Maintain existing contributing vegetation</td>
<td>Design Compatible Alterations for current needs</td>
<td>Management out of purview of PSNC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Révision</strong></td>
<td>Protect and Maintain existing contributing trees</td>
<td>Protect and Maintain existing contributing trees</td>
<td>Repair curbs, paving, drains, and fine grading</td>
<td>Protect and Maintain hedge planting</td>
<td>Repair fine grading</td>
<td>Replace In-kind as contributing specimens decline</td>
<td>Design for missing serpentine garden vegetation</td>
<td>Design Compatible Alterations for service-oriented amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Révision</strong></td>
<td>Replace In-kind as contributing specimens decline</td>
<td>Replace In-kind as contributing specimens decline</td>
<td>Repair fine grading</td>
<td>Use Phased Removal for non-contributing vegetation</td>
<td>Design for missing rose garden feature</td>
<td>Design for missing alee feature on north drive</td>
<td>Design Compatible Alterations for path to accommodate new use</td>
<td>Design Compatible Alterations for current needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Révision</strong></td>
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</table>
TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

East Lawn
The primary sweep of the east lawn remains intact as originally designed, as it maintains the broad, mounding topography that slopes to the bluff and the significant views of the palazzo and ocean. The low shrubs along the east edge of the lawn are consistent with the period of significance; however, the dueling evergreen clusters that once framed the view from the palazzo are no longer in evidence. With the exception of these masses, the east lawn character zone maintains a high level of integrity, and preservation is the recommended treatment for this zone.

The low shrubs should be pruned to a crisper shape more in keeping with the character during the period of significance. A chain link security fence now lines the east edge of the character zone along the shrubs. This fence can be preserved as required for enhanced security measure and precautions associated with the stewardship of the cultural resource, but the fabric should be patched and grading repaired along the base of the fence as needed. The sewer line and manhole across the north part of the lawn can be left while it is in use. If future work requires the removal of the sewer line, the lawn is to be regraded and all vegetation replaced to maintain the character of the east lawn. The turf of the east lawn should be protected and maintained, and repaired as needed under the guidelines of a turf health and management plan.

Newport Cliff Walk
The Newport Cliff Walk terrace and path make up a distinct zone, characterized by the continuous circulation route, the panoramic views of the ocean, the dramatic landform of the cliffs, and the embankment on the inland side of the path. Though the land is a part of The Breakers property and so owned by the PSNC, this section of the site is under easement held by the City of Newport and is therefor maintained by the city. Despite some changes to paving material, the addition of a chain link fence for security purposes, and additional planting along the embankment, the Newport Cliff Walk character zone holds a high level of integrity.

Because the Newport Cliff Walk is not under management by the PSNC, the treatment recommendation of this character zone is not in the scope of this report.
**Beaux Arts Landscape Areas**

The Beaux Arts landscape area is made up of 4 distinct landscape units: the Forecourt, North Parterre, East Terrace, and South Parterre. The overall integrity of these areas is high and the recommended treatment for these is restoration, but the specific features within these units have different treatments based on their integrity and available information. There are also several elements of stonework throughout the Beaux Arts landscape areas, including the limestone balustrade, stone fountains, and statuary. The assessment and treatment recommendations for these elements is not part of the CLR, but can be found in *The Breakers Outdoor Sculpture Conservation Project* prepared by conservator Patricia Miller and performed concurrently with this report. As part of that project all outdoor sculpture, urns, and fountain features were inventoried, cleaned, and assessed.

**North Parterre Garden**

The North Parterre Garden has high integrity as the circulation structure, vistas, spatial composition, and general grading are all intact. However the vegetation in this unit has low integrity and it is not recommended that the original design be restored due to lack of documentation and threat to the architecture. Therefore, the general recommended treatment for the north parterre garden is restoration, with a recommendation of rehabilitation for the vegetation.

Restoration of the surface conditions includes subtle crowning for positive drainage and resodding the lawn panels in the path. The landform in the central panel should be regraded to make flat planes and crisp edges. Metal edging should be repaired and replaced as needed and set flush with lawn panels. All paths are to be regraded to drain and repaved with crushed stone. The small yew shrubs in the corners of the lawn panels should be removed.

Vegetation of the north parterre garden includes the rose garden in the central panel, a row of beech trees on the west edge, and a row of potted standard trees on the south edge. Rehabilitation is the recommended treatment for the rose garden because no plans or detailed photographs of this garden have been found, rendering restoration an impractical solution. The specific garden design and species selection are to be developed as a separate project based on historic photographs and further research. The row of beech trees that once lined the west side of the North Terrace is no longer extant. Many of these trees fell at some point between 1958 and 2003. The remaining trees were removed in 2003 as part of the roof restoration project. Following the restoration, two upright European beech were planted as replacements, the upright form selected for a reduced threat to the architecture. Our recommendation is to rehabilitate the original row of trees using Fagus sylvatica ‘Fastigiata’ as a substitute for the full canopy species. This will create a sense of the original feature, but without jeopardizing the architecture. The potted standard trees on the south edge of the north parterre garden are evident in some historic photographs. Because these shrubs were potted, it is assumed they were seasonal elements that were
brought inside during the winter months. They were likely citrus or tropical plants that required a high level of horticultural care and so therefore are not practical with the resources and use of today. The recommendation is to rehabilitate this feature by replanting a hardy shrub of similar spatial quality.

**East Terrace**
The east terrace has high integrity as the panoramic vistas and spatial relationships are in tact. The recommended treatment for this area is restoration, with work limited to the paving material. The terrace is paved entirely in limestone pavers, which have spalled and chipped over the years. It is recommended that the limestone pavers be replaced or repaired as needed with a matching stone.

**South Parterre Garden**
The South Parterre garden has high integrity as the spatial composition, circulation, landform, vegetation, and vistas are all intact. Though none of the vegetation dates to the period of significance, a restoration in the mid 1970s replaced much of the vegetation and garden layout that had previously been removed. The recommended treatment for this area is restoration, with most work on repairing surface conditions and returning vegetation to the intended form.

Restoration of the surface conditions includes subtle crowning for positive drainage and resodding the lawn panels in the path. The landform in the central panel should be regraded to make flat planes and crisp edges. Metal edging should be repaired and replaced as needed and set flush with lawn panels. All paths are to be regraded to drain and repaved with crushed stone.

Restoration of the vegetation involves reshaping the various yew masses to their intended size and form. In some cases this can be accomplished through heavy pruning, others by replacement. One element that is currently missing is a low bed of ivy that historically framed the sunken garden. This may be restored, though the increased required maintenance should be evaluated against available labor. The vines on the wood trellis should be evaluated for health and replanted as needed. The wood and copper of the trellis itself are to be evaluated by a conservator.

**The Forecourt**
The integrity of the forecourt in its current condition is high as the circulation elements and spatial relationships are intact. The recommended treatment for this area is restoration, with recommendations for surface materials and vegetation. For treatment of the surface materials includes regrading and repaving the pedestrian walks and drive as the materials have deteriorated and some areas have settled resulting in poor drainage. The granite curbs should be protected and maintained, repaired, or replaced as needed.
Treatment of the vegetation in this area includes crowning and resodding all lawn panels and removal of the pachysandra along both sides of the north balustrade. The origin of the lion statue in the north corner is unknown and historic aerials show a beech tree in this location during the period of significance. It is recommended that a beech be replanted in this corner. Historic aerials also show a tree in the center of the northwest lawn panel, on axis with the front door. On site interviews with Bob Coyne identified this as a ginkgo and it is recommended that a ginkgo be replaced in this location.

**Entrance Drives**

The ground plane of the entrance drives is mostly in tact, but the former allée on the north drive is no longer extant and the allée on the west drive is shortened. Added elements for visitor services and access include the ticket booth, a post and chain fence, and additional pedestrian paths along the north drive. Due to the diminished vegetation and those impacts on the views and spatial organization of the character zone, as well as the added elements that distract from the intended design, the entrance drives have a moderate degree of integrity. Restoration is the recommended treatment for this character zone.

Restoration of the surface condition includes regrading and repaving the pedestrian walks and drive as the materials have deteriorated and some areas have settled resulting in poor drainage. The lawn panels should be crowned and resodded, and granite curbs straightened and reset as needed. The PSNC should consider removal of the post and chain fence, or creating more gaps along it for increased circulation. The ticket booth by the entrance gate should also be removed once visitor amenities are consolidated in another location.

The pedestrian walk to the north service entrance was not extant during the period of significance, nor does it appear in 1971 photographs. This was likely added when the walks were all repaved in 1989 or 1990 and is presumed to be a necessary route for visitor circulation. For this specific feature, rehabilitation is the recommended treatment. The blending of this paving with the flanking walk, however, does not identify this area as an added piece. The recommendation is to remove this portion of the paving, replace the granite curb flush with the walk, and repave the pedestrian walkway as needed with a different material. The new paving material should be selected as a site-wide standard for all paving that was not extant during the period of significance to differentiate the added walks from the historic.

Restoration of the vegetation in this character zone includes replacing the pin oak allées on both drives. Pin oaks were replanted along the west entry drive in 1995 and are in good condition today. Additional pin oaks of large caliper should be added to the west end of the drive to extend the allée to the entrance gate. This should occur after the removal of the ticket booth. The pin oak allée along the north drive should be replanted, requiring the
removal of other vegetation along the drive. The tightly clipped yew hedges in front of the ticket booth and caretaker’s cottage should be removed. The rows of evergreen and potted standard trees along the lawn panels should also be considered for rehabilitation.

**Canopy Trees**

The canopy trees on The Breakers site provide a collection of stately, mixed specimens that was intended to embrace the palazzo and define the spatial expanse along the west and north portion of the property. However, there have been substantial losses over the decades, and they retain only a moderate degree of integrity. There has been ongoing care for the remaining trees provided by the Preservation Society and Bartlett Tree Experts with a management strategy to retain the existing canopy and replace specimens with historically accurate species. The recommended treatment for this character zone is restoration with a long-term approach to gradually add density, transition to historically accurate species, and locate replacement trees with historical accuracy.

Restoration of this character zone involves evening the grade for improved drainage by filling divots and low areas. Turf under the canopy trees should be renovated as needed and maintained according to a turf management plan. Mulch rings should be added as needed on newly planted trees; for established specimens the mulch ring can be reduced. The embankment in the northwest quadrant, a remnant of the former lawn tennis court, should be removed and the ground smoothed in that area.

Restoration of the vegetation involves adding density to all sections of the canopy character zone, as seen in the 1929 aerials. There are several open areas especially in the northwest quadrant that should be planted and closed. There are also many Norway maples throughout the site that do not date from the period of significance; they may be volunteers of former specimen trees or planted as replacements after the 1938 hurricane. These trees are to be gradually removed and replaced with historically accurate species that are not invasive to the area. A list of historically accurate species is to be developed to help with tree selection.

**Protected Lawn**

Restoration of the canopy character zone is closely tied to the preservation of the protected lawn character zone, as in many cases the protected lawn is created by adjacent canopy trees. The protected lawn areas that were historically present are the north lawn, between the children’s cottage and the Newport Cliff Walk, and the south lawn serving as an extension of the south parterre. In both of these areas canopy trees have been planted, thus diminishing the character of protected lawn. The integrity of this character zone is moderate and preservation is the recommended treatment.
Preservation of this character zone requires maintaining open space in these areas. Trees planted within the lawn areas should be considered for moving to alternate locations on the site as their size permits. Likely candidates for moving by tree spade include the young horsechestnut and English oak in the south lawn. For specimens too large to move, they should be maintained as they still have inherent value and provide character to the overall site. This is the likely treatment for the larger trees in the north lawn. However, as the trees decline from natural causes or require removal for project work they are not to be replaced; these areas will be phased back to a protected lawn character.

Additionally, reestablishment of the protected lawn areas also involves planting the edges to provide enclosure. To provide protection for the south lawn, lindens should be replanted at the southeast corner of the south parterre and the canopy along the southern edge enhanced so the canopy nearly closes and frames the view of the ocean. The north lawn was separated from the open east lawn by a beech tree that has recently died. This tree should be replaced with another European beech.

The surface condition of this character zone is predominantly composed of turf with no significant land forms or grading but sloped to drain. Two lines of marble pavers, approximately 1' square, extend from the staircase in the center of the south parterre and across the south lawn. In the existing condition, these step stone paths terminate in the middle of the south lawn, but historic images show them extending to the serpentine walk. The preservations of the surface condition for this character zone includes renovating the turf and fine grading to ensure positive drainage. The marble stone path should be repaired and maintained. Existing stones should be taken up and reset, as they have settled over the years. Upon demolition of the ticket booth to the south of the main entry, the marble pavers should be salvaged. These pavers can be used to extend the marble pathways to the serpentine walk. Supplemental marble stone shall be used as needed, though marked discreetly as non-original material.

**Perimeter Planting and Serpentine Walk**

The perimeter planting and serpentine walk character zone is comprised of the curvilinear footpath that runs along the perimeter of the site, planting associated with the footpath, and all planting along the stone and iron fence that encloses the north, west, and south sides of the site. This distinctive feature evolved from the Bowditch design of the picturesque landscape of the Lorillard estate that preceded the Vanderbilt tenure. During the period of significance the gardens of this zone were elaborate, the maintenance of which required several staff gardeners at a great expense. Since the period of significance, the gardens have changed considerably, predominantly with the decline of the multilayered planting strategy and the over-maturity of remnant vegetation, but also with changes in the path configuration. Parts of the path have been altered to accommodate ticket sales,
increase safety and accessibility of the public, enhance way finding, and provide visitor amenities. The integrity of this zone in its current condition is low, and rehabilitation is the only appropriate treatment.

The recommendation to rehabilitate the perimeter planting and serpentine walk is intended to recapture a sense of the scope, variety, and character it once was, while simultaneously accounting for the poor integrity of the existing conditions, the lack of available documentation of the historic condition, current management needs, and operational restrictions on budget and labor resources. Rehabilitation of this character zone can be divided into three primary projects: design compatible alterations to the visitor service facilities, design for the missing feature of the serpentine walk garden and perimeter planting, and repair of the serpentine walk.

Within this character zone, the section around the caretaker’s cottage and main entry drive has undergone significant changes since the period of significance, with several interventions made to accommodate visitor services. As these programs are all still pertinent, full removal of the outbuildings, some of which are temporary structures, is not a practical solution for the contemporary needs of the property. The recommended treatment is to design compatible alterations and additions to consolidate visitor services and repair negative impact on the character of the serpentine walk.

The vegetation of this character zone is to be rehabilitated by designing a new planting scheme to recapture the historical character while meeting the contemporary needs and operational limitations. The historic planting strategy consisted of arcing forms of layered shrubs, hedges, and herbaceous vegetation that created a series of spaces of changing character as one traveled along the path. Vegetation was used to create a sense of enclosure and to control views, with periodic glimpses of the ocean or of the palazzo. The current condition of the vegetation along the serpentine walk, however, no longer exhibits the intended character of the walk, and much of the extant vegetation is not original to the period of significance. The rehabilitated design must reestablish the spatial composition of the serpentine walk during the period of significance. Generally, remnant overgrown vegetation should be removed, except in the area of the proposed new welcome center, where some mature vegetation helps to minimize the scale of the new structure and occlude views of the structure from the palazzo; the dense perimeter planting along the fence, comprised of a mix of shrubs and deciduous canopy trees, should be replanted. Contributing specimen trees are to be protected and maintained, but overgrown screening shrubs and those in poor condition should be removed. The replacement vegetation with species-specific selections and layout is to be developed with respect to available plant lists and historic images, as well as contemporary management objectives, and operational restrictions. If additional maintenance will be required for the rehabilitated garden, additional resources should be accounted for as part of the planning and design process.
The surface condition of this zone is to be rehabilitated by repairing the path itself. The general alignment of the path is consistent with the historic record, however some alterations have been made, including a very straight section in the southwest quadrant, a widened path in the northeast quadrant, and the full deterioration of the northern link to the cliff walk in the northeast quadrant. Repair of the path includes restoring the northeast spur, regrading with a slight crown, and paving with fresh chip and seal. A steel edge along the entirety of the path is also recommended, as the path gets more use and wear than it did as a private residence. A steel edge will keep the pavement in tact longer and mark the curvilinear geometry for future generations to maintain. For areas of heavy use, the path may be widened with additional paving on either side. This paving should somehow be differentiated, or the original width of the path be clearly marked in some fashion. All drains along the walk should be cleared and maintained.

Rehabilitation of the perimeter planting and serpentine walk is the most complex treatment of any character zone on The Breakers site as a result of the design-focused treatments, including designing the serpentine walk garden, perimeter planting, and alterations to service-oriented facilities. Due to this complexity, the treatment recommendation includes three possible implementation strategies for rehabilitation of this character zone.

1. Phased Implementation by Section
The design and installation of the serpentine walk and perimeter planting occurs by section, the limit of work determined by available resources and management objectives. The rehabilitated garden will be gradually constructed through multiple projects until it reaches a point of completion. The main advantage of this approach is the flexibility it affords in timing and funding; the drawback is the intermittent fragmentation of the serpentine walk prior to completion, and the inconsistent design and maturation of the garden.

2. Phased Implementation by Task
The design and implementation of the serpentine walk is completed by task and applied evenly across the whole character zone. Possible tasks include removal of overgrown vegetation, replacement in kind of the arching evergreen rows, and planting of the herbaceous layer. The scale of each task will depend on available resources and management objectives. The advantage of this approach is the flexibility it allows in funding, and consistency of appearance during the intermittent phases. The main drawback is in the logistics of access across the site for multiple implementation projects.

3. Master Plan Approach
The design and implementation of the entire perimeter planting and serpentine walk is carried out at once and budgeted to meet preallocated available resources. The advantage of this approach lies in the opportunity to develop consistency of design execution, with relative efficiency of construction in terms of access and logistics,
and achieve completion of an entire character zone at once. The drawbacks are the significant initial investment required for a project of this scale.

Realistically, the design and implementation strategy to be utilized will likely be a combination of the above options. For instance, the repair of the path may be implemented across the whole zone at once, but replanting of the shrub and herbaceous layer may be designed and implemented in phases by section. The best strategy should be determined based on funding strategies and management objectives.

**Service Areas**

The service area character zone is on the north side of the house and connects to the north drive. The topography is the most prominent characteristic of this zone, as it is a dramatic depression in the ground to the lower floor of the palazzo and is surrounded by retaining walls. There was likely an additional service area north of the caretaker’s cottage during the period of significance, as this is the location of the underground boiler room and there was probably some service associated with the structure and its occupants, though no documentation on this specific area has been found. Existing service-oriented additions, including the ticketing booth and tent, vending machines, and restroom facilities, have blurred the boundaries of this character zone. Due to changes to the historic character of the service areas and the resulting impact on adjacent character zones, the integrity of this zone is low to moderate. Rehabilitation is the recommended treatment to accommodate for contemporary service requirements.

The service drive to the north of the palazzo should be repaved with a fresh layer of asphalt or chip and seal. The walls should be evaluated for integrity and protected and maintained or restored as needed. The service area by the Caretaker’s Cottage should be reduced, contained, and removed from the serpentine walk. The area is to be designed as part of the service facility perimeter planting and serpentine walk rehabilitation project. The planting around both service areas should be reestablished as part of the perimeter planting and serpentine walk rehabilitation project.
Treatment recommendations by character zone.
DESCRIPTION OF TREATMENT ZONES

A. Oak Tree Allées – Restore

B. Perimeter Planting and Serpentine Walk – Rehabilitate

C. Canopy – Restore

D. Protected Lawn – Preserve

E. East Lawn – Preserve

F. Formal Beaux Arts Gardens:
   - North Parterre – Restore
   - East Terrace – Restore
   - South Parterre – Restore
   - Forecourt – Restore

G. Service – Rehabilitate

H. Cliff Walk – Out of Scope
Replace northeast section of serpentine walk.

The Breakers Cultural Landscape Report

Pin oak allées on main entry drive and north drive, and dense canopy in northwest quadrant. Circa 1929, courtesy Vanderbilt Family Archives

Serpentine walk circa 1914, courtesy Library of Congress. Notice the intensely maintained layered planting. Recommendation is to rehabilitate for reduced maintenance requirements. Layout and planting plan to be designed and developed as part of phased rehabilitation project.
Repair pedestrian path and drive, reset curb, repave with new base as needed.

Regrade and repave path and drive as needed for drainage.
Prune back overgrown yew and rhododendron shrubs to create passable walk. Remove low hanging limbs from adjacent trees. Remove and replace as needed in rehabilitation projects.
TREATMENT PLAN FACING PAGE

Description of Treatment Zones

A. North Parterre – Restore
   Restore overall structure and surface material
   Rehabilitate planted features

B. East Terrace – Restore

C. South Parterre – Restore

D. Forecourt – Restore
Remove lion statue and pachysandra. Replace with new beech tree.

Aerial image of forecourt, circa 1939. Courtesy Vanderbilt Family.
Consult masonry conservator for repair of statuary, balustrade, etc.

Consider rehabilitating steps to make South Parterre garden ADA accessible.
Add layer of stone dust to paths. Reset metal edging, regrade lawn panels to create flat planes with crisp grade breaks. Lawn to be flush with top of metal edging and resod.

South Parterre garden, note size and shape of shrubs in lawn panels. Circa 1929, courtesy Vanderbilt Family Archives.
Repair and replace bluestone on East Terrace as needed.

South Parterre garden circa 1914. Note the crisp landform, bedding planting, and perimeter bed of ivy. Vines on trellis are full, and standards in pots surround terrace. Courtesy Library of Congress.

Restore vines on trellis to historic form (see below). Regrade landform to make flat planes and crisp grade breaks. Restore perimeter bed of ivy.
North Parterre garden circa 1932-34. Note line of standard shrubs in pots and rose garden planting in central panel with perimeter planting. Courtesy Southern Methodist University.

North Parterre garden circa 1958. Note line of beech trees along west side. At this point some were damaged by hurricanes, but row is still evident. Courtesy Library of Congress.
Maintain ivy along balustrade as done historically. Circa 1914, courtesy Library of Congress.

Repair or replace bluestone pavers as needed on East Terrace.
Material marked as Contributing Specimen is found to date back to the period of significance and should be preserved as much as possible. Trees marked Contributing Type, Form, and Location are trees that were planted as replacements for those that existed during the period of significance. The individual specimen is not the original, but it matches the original in species, character and location. Non-Contributing Material to Preserve is anything that does not align with the historic plan, but has a value and should be retained until project work or natural causes necessitate its removal. Non-Contributing for Phased Removal or Replacement indicates material that does not match the historic type or form and should be removed, or removed and replaced, as part of the rehabilitation of the serpentine walk. Non-Contributing for Removal indicates material that detracts from the historic character and should be removed immediately.
Recommended treatment of existing evergreen trees
Recommended treatment of existing shrub layer
Recommended treatment of existing groundcover layer
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**Maps and Atlases**


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**Interviews**

Robinson & Associates interview with Bob Coyne, former caretaker at The Breakers, and Preservation Society of Newport County staff Bryan Coyne and Jeff Curtis, October 30, 2013.

**Archival Repositories**


National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland. Record Group 69: Records of the Work Projects Administration (WPA).

Newport Historical Society, Newport, Rhode Island. Photographic and Graphic Collections. Graphic materials included historic photographs and postcards of The Breakers (Peabody & Stearns), The Breakers (Hunt), and Ochre Point.


Preservation Society of Newport County Archives, Newport, Rhode Island. The Breakers Historical Collection. Documentation and archival materials included maintenance records, scholarly studies, historic photographs, and historic correspondence related to The Breakers, as well as earlier buildings and structures on the site. The Breakers Historical Collection also included original correspondence related to the development of the gardens and grounds and an 1895 site plan of The Breakers by Ernest W. Bowditch.

Redwood Library and Athenaeum, Newport, Rhode Island. Materials included historic atlases, periodicals, ephemera, and reference books.