

MATHER HOMESTEAD CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT



Mather Homestead Foundation
Draft for Review
January 2024



Heritage Landscapes LLC
Preservation Landscape Architects & Planners
Charlotte, Vermont & Norwalk, Connecticut

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Mather Homestead Foundation
Darien, Connecticut



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Cover Photograph: Heritage Landscapes, Mather Homestead, July 28, 2023.

Inside Cover Photograph: Heritage Landscapes, Mather Homestead, July 28, 2023.

Acknowledgments Page: Circa 1905-12 photograph, Mather Homestead, courtesy McPherson-Nickerson family.

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Mather Homestead Foundation and Heritage Landscapes LLC

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Mather Homestead CLR ♦ Acknowledgments



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Acknowledgments can be signed by MHF board chair and director.

Mather Homestead ♦ Cultural Landscape Report

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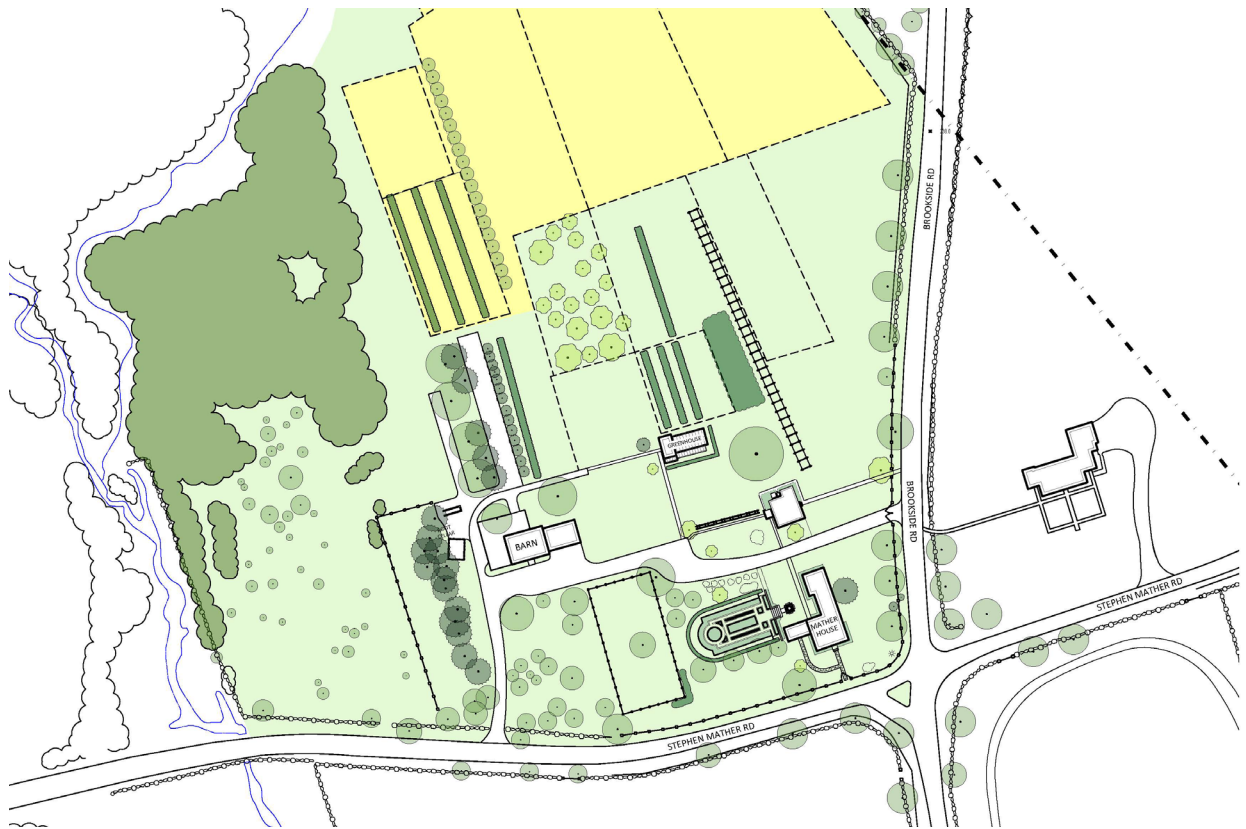
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Mather Homestead ♦ Cultural Landscape Report

1 ♦ Introduction & Methodology



A. Introduction to Mather Homestead Cultural Landscape Report

The cultural landscape of the Mather Homestead has evolved since its establishment in 1778 to the present day. Deacon Joseph Mather and Sarah Scott, his wife, built the Homestead as a farmhouse on over 100 acres of land. They utilized the property for domestic and large-scale crop cultivation, raising livestock, and harvesting wood for heating the house. Over subsequent generations within the Mather family, the Homestead landscape continued to support a relatively self-sufficient lifestyle. In 1905, Stephen Tyng Mather inherited the Mather Homestead, which served as his family's summer home during his tenure as U.S. Assistant Secretary of the Interior and as the founding director of the National Park Service from 1915 to 1929. Following Stephen T. Mather's death in 1930, the Homestead passed to his daughter, Bertha Mather McPherson, who raised her family at the Homestead alongside her husband, Edward McPherson. Bertha Mather McPherson resided at the Mather Homestead until her passing in 1993, and Edward McPherson lived there until he died in 2002. The Homestead remained under the ownership of the McPherson family until 2017 when the property was donated to the Mather Homestead Foundation to be preserved and operated as a museum for the education and enjoyment of the public.

In 2023, the Mather Homestead Foundation commissioned Heritage Landscapes to prepare a thorough Mather Homestead Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) for this historically significant site. The CLR research findings indicate that originating as a productive, subsistence-based landscape, the Mather Homestead steadily evolved from its conception in 1778 to the present day. The property was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1963 and inscribed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1966, with a boundary amendment in 1978.¹ The 1963 nomination notes its significance for its association

with Stephen Tyng Mather as the founding director of the National Park Service. This CLR serves as a deeply historically informed master plan, investigating the historic and current landscape, analyzing continuity and change, determining the preservation direction, and setting forth treatment recommendations to address the continuing evolution of this important cultural landscape.

While the period of historical significance defined by the National Register nomination spans the years when Stephen Tyng Mather owned the property, from 1905 to 1929, and emphasizes 1778 as the year the Homestead was established, the documentation does not encompass the multi-generational stories embedded in this significant landscape. Although the Homestead's national significance stems from its association with Stephen Tyng Mather, this CLR seeks to address the full history of the property, from pre-contact Indigenous history to Bertha Mather McPherson's influence on the landscape and through to the present day.

B. Defining a Cultural Landscape

The purposeful design and construction of the Mather Homestead landscape identifies it as a historic designed landscape. This is a specific type of cultural landscape, which the National Park Service defines as “a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.”² There are four categories of cultural landscapes, not mutually exclusive, which are as follows:

- **Historic Site** is defined as “a landscape significant for its association with a historic event, activity, or person.” Examples include the Noah Webster House, a site linked directly to an important figure in U.S. history, and Fort Griswold Battlefield, a site associated with an important event of short duration, namely a battle in the Revolutionary War.
- **Historic Designed Landscape** is defined as a landscape “consciously designed or laid out... according to design principles.” Examples of historic designed landscapes include the Hill-Stead estate in Farmington, Connecticut, and Yale campus designs by landscape architect Beatrix Farrand.
- **Historic Vernacular Landscape** is defined as “a landscape whose use, construction, or physical layout reflects endemic traditions, customs, beliefs, or values; expresses cultural values, social behavior and individual actions over time; and is manifested in physical features and materials and their interrelationships, including patterns of spatial organization, land use, circulation, vegetation, structures, and objects.” Examples of historic vernacular landscapes include Weir Farm in Wilton, Connecticut, and the Morrill Homestead in Strafford, Vermont.
- **Ethnographic Landscape** contains “a variety of natural and cultural resources that associated people define as heritage resources.” One example of this type of cultural landscape is the Cape Cod National Seashore, which encompasses archaeological sites that exemplify the lifeways of Indigenous occupants over thousands of years.³

The four landscape types provide a framework for understanding the diversity of cultural landscapes, emphasizing that the interactions of people and place, of humanity and nature, shape these landscapes as combined works of ongoing heritage.

The cultural landscape of the Mather Homestead, as evolved for nearly two-and-a-half centuries, exhibits the characteristics of a diverse cultural landscape. Within the historic vernacular landscape of the overall Homestead property, there are historic designed features such as the Sunken Garden. The property is also a nationally important historic site for its association with Stephen Tyng Mather, while it is locally important for the multi-generational Mather family ownership and stewardship.

C. Cultural Landscape Report Project Description & Scope

A cultural landscape report (CLR) is a deeply historically informed master plan. For this Mather Homestead CLR, the Heritage Landscapes (HL) team crafts a thorough investigative process into gathering and studying the documentation for the seven-acre domestic core and productive lands of the historic property as well as the broader context of the crossroads and adjacent conserved lands, which were historically within the Mather family holdings. Heritage Landscapes (HL) brings extensive comparable experience in over 110 cultural landscape inventories, studies and full reports that are each deeply informed by historical documentation while incorporating the critical issues of today. The archival collections at the Mather Homestead, along with materials generously provided by the McPherson-Nickerson family, offer a rich variety of historic plans, photographs, videos, and written primary and secondary sources that capture the evolution of the landscape over time. Historic and contemporary aerial images contribute to these documentary sources, as does HL field reconnaissance and on-site photography.

The Scope of Work for this CLR identifies the intent of the project to understand, preserve and advance the importance of the historic Mather Homestead landscape into the future. The sequential chapters of this CLR address historic context and landscape history; the existing landscape in 2024; analysis of integrity and significance; and a landscape preservation approach and treatment guidance.

The Mather Homestead CLR effort is informed by historic documentation while incorporating the varied issues of today to preserve and uplift the landscape. These relevant issues embrace the inclusion of human diversity, biodiversity, and habitat; improved access for people of all abilities; sustainability; scenic beauty; optimized landscape maintenance; and broader learning opportunities that connect landscape and history. This actionable document will not only guide future stewardship but also serve as an ongoing reference for the property.

D. CLR Methodology

This CLR follows federal guidance for the development of cultural landscape reports to include Parts 1 and 2 of a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR). Part 1 of a CLR documents property history; records the existing landscape character; analyzes significance and integrity; and assesses continuity and change. Part 2 explores and selects the appropriate preservation treatment approach; details the elements of that preservation treatment; and provides guidance for treatment implementation. The US Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* provides four treatment options, with Preservation (to protect, repair, and replace in-kind) as the baseline that underpins any of the more intensive treatments.⁴ Restoration, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation each intervene more comprehensively than a baseline Preservation approach.

Federal professional advice also recommends that a CLR Part 3 be carried out as future preservation and management actions advance. A summary overview narrative description and timeline of the work undertaken, and accomplishments will serve to track dates and scope of work. As interventions are made projects would be documented capturing specific areas of work to include design and as-constructed plans, details and specifications, as appropriate to each undertaking. These record keeping efforts align to best practices in stewardship of the historic Mather Homestead into the future.

Bringing forward the CLR advances the understanding of this important designed landscape from its origins to the present day. This type of documentation has not been undertaken before at the Mather Homestead and will not be required again at this level of effort. Over time additional research and investigation may reveal new information, and recording those details could take the form of an Appendix to the CLR. This CLR will function as both guidance and as a constant reference in the years ahead.

Importantly, this historical record of landscape as constructed character and details through to contemporary uses, serves as the basis for directing the character of the future landscape. From this firm documentary and evidence basis and the needs of the property to serve its purposes as a Darien historic site, the CLR establishes directions. Those directions for the landscape are in harmony with the processes of continuity and change and informed by current challenges and opportunities.

In this work, Heritage Landscapes applies landscape preservation methods and practices through observations as well as research. Within the landscape are character areas (LCAs) defined as zones that were intended to share features and qualities as cohesive parts of the composition and are unified by purposeful evolution. Each LCA may include a few component landscapes, such as the sun ken garden, within LCA 1.

The details of a landscape composition are determined by a series of explicit character-defining features (CDFs). These physical features include

- Land uses
- Spatial and visual organization
- Atmosphere, light wind, bird song, seasonal color
- Topography, the shape of the ground
- Vegetation, of all types from groundcovers, and wildflowers to trees
- Circulation, for pedestrians and vehicles to include parking
- Landscape structures, non-habitable arbor, pergola
- Small-scale objects and furnishings

The methods of delineating LCAs and observing and assessing CDFs are applied throughout the CLR.

Another useful method is a comparison of historic and contemporary images to include ground and aerial photography. A sequence of revealing aerial views, included throughout the illustrated history narrative, captures continuity and change. In addition, selected historic views are matched to contemporary views in a simple method called repeat photography. This technique allows a direct comparison of a landscape scene at two points in time, revealing what remains and what has changed over time. Captions and narrative illuminate these comparisons.

D1. Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)

To facilitate research, discussion, analysis and treatment, the cultural landscape of the project site is defined into legible units referred to as landscape character areas (LCA). For each LCA, physical qualities shaped through historical development define and illustrate the landscape character. Boundaries of LCAs may be loosely delineated by slopes or vegetation, or they may be clearly defined by physical features like a path or road. Based on current and historic aerials of the area and field walks, the project team delineated distinct LCAs that are employed to document and analyze continuity and change over time.

Three landscape character areas comprise the Mather Homestead landscape. LCA 1 encompasses the domestic grounds, including the sunken garden and house surrounds. LCA 2 consists of the component areas west of the house in the cultivated gardens, pasture and barn surrounds. LCA 3 captures the broader contextual landscape to the north of the large-scale crop production and woodlands.

LCA 1 Domestic Grounds, Sunken Garden and House Surrounds: Serving as the primary historic core of the property, LCA 1 encompasses the main house, the brick terrace, the Sunken Garden, the Little House, and lawn areas to the west of the Sunken Garden and north of the driveway and Little House. Architectural elements and formalized vegetation form well-defined spaces that provide the basis for the majority of programming and functionality of the homestead property.

LCA 2 Cultivated Gardens, Pasture and Barn Surrounds: Containing the more contemporary landscape components, LCA 2 resides to the west of the historic core and is defined by the Chilton Education Center surrounds and entry sequence from Stephen Mather Road, bordered by a naturalized knoll and former tennis lawn.

LCA 3 Large-Scale Crop Production and Woodlands: Comprised primarily of what is now naturalized landscape, LCA 3 is made up of two land parcels managed respectively by two non-profit organizations, namely the Darien Land Trust and the Mather Homestead Foundation. This area is characterized by an open meadow field that is contiguous with the larger Mather Homestead parcel containing the core of the Homestead in LCA 1 and the Chilton Education Center surrounds in LCA 2, bordered by woodland running beside the Goodwives River.

D2. Landscape Character-Defining Features

In addition to component landscapes, LCAs contain character-defining features (CDFs). Heritage Landscapes approach follows federal guidance, including the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* and *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*, which define a CDF as "a prominent or distinctive aspect, quality, or characteristic of a cultural landscape that contributes significantly to its physical character." CDFs are identified and enumerated in the CLR as a series of interrelated, specific aspects of the cultural landscape. Those that express the historical significance of the landscape are also known as contributing features because they embody authenticity related to that significance. These CDFs are organized by categories of landscape characteristics, including:

Spatial Organization: These features address the three-dimensional organization and patterns of spaces in the landscape and land uses shaped by both cultural and natural features. Aspects of the landscape

such as the level ground plane, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, linear tree plantings, enclosed Sunken Garden, and expansive open meadow and lawn predicate the spatial patterns of the project area.

Views and Visual Relationships: Views and visual relationships are formed by combinations of other features in the landscape. Views connect physically separated areas. Historic and contemporary photographs capture this aspect of the landscape over time and enable comparisons. Important views include the framing of the house from Stephen Mather Road and viewsheds spanning across the open fields to the north.

Topography: Topography is the shape of the ground plane and its height or depth. Changes in topography occur due to natural systems and human manipulation. Drainage relates to slopes, landforms, watershed systems, surface and underground flows, and their effects. The general topography of the site slopes gently downward to the west toward the Goodwives River.

Vegetation: Vegetation can include groups of plant types, individual specimens, agricultural fields, formal or informal tree groves, woodlands, and ground plane vegetation like turf. At the Mather Homestead, vegetation includes, among others, mature shade trees, linear plantings of evergreen trees, the yew hedge around the Sunken Garden, and ornamental flowering trees.

Circulation: Circulation features include roads, drives, walks, paths, and parking areas individually sited or linked to form a network or system. Alignment, width, surface and edge treatment, and materials contribute to the character of circulation features. Circulation in the project area is comprised of the gravel vehicular drive, fieldstone and slate walks, and mulch paths.

Landscape Structures and Buildings: Landscape structures are non-habitable constructed features, such as walls and bridges. Buildings are structures intended to shelter some sort of human activity such as a restroom or event hall. These features shape the behavior of visitors and provide mass and design style in ways that impact the character of the landscape. The Main House and Chilton Education Center are some of the numerous structures and buildings within the Mather Homestead.

Small-Scale Objects and Furnishings: These utilitarian or ornamental landscape features offer an amenity, focus attention, define a threshold, or articulate the character and quality of spaces within a cultural landscape. In addition to signage and lights, small-scale objects and furnishings in the project area include wooden benches, beehives, and a Free Little Library structure.

E. Documentary Sources

Documentation from the Mather Homestead Foundation provided the bulk of the relevant materials, including historic photographs, plans, maps, surveys, publications, and letters. Historic and contemporary aerial images, field reconnaissance and on-site photography contributed to these documentary sources. These resources collectively provide evidence of landscape character and features, historically and as evolved. This record of the design intent and the landscape evolution lays the foundation for assessing continuity and change and guiding preservation treatment.

The following multiple documentary sources were used to compile this report and to inform the accompanying plans:

- Historic photographs provided by the Mather Homestead Foundation and the Nickerson family
- Historic landscape plans of the grounds and Sunken Garden by Walter Burleigh Griffin and others
- Historic aerial photography sourced by HistoricAerials.com
- Contemporary aerial photographs, Google Earth
- Heritage Landscapes on-site research and photographs, 2023

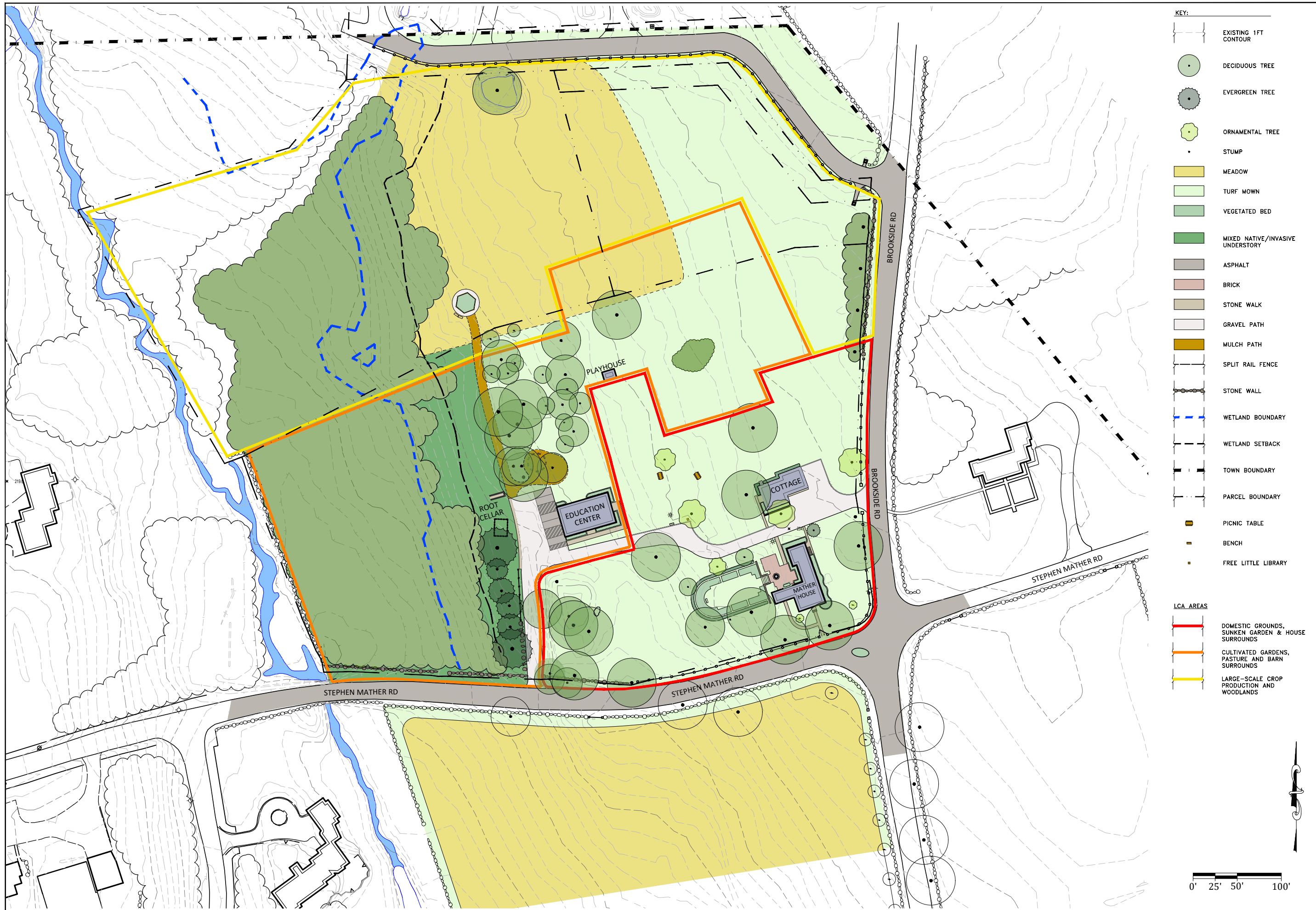
A collection of relevant historical images and aerial photographs has been assembled in this report. The codes used to credit these materials include:

MHF	Mather Homestead Foundation
GE	Google Earth
HL	Heritage Landscapes graphics and landscape photographs
HA	HistoricAerials.com

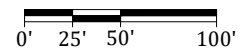
In addition to the images throughout, this report includes a set of plans that provide graphic references that aid in orienting the narrative and images. These plans are included as 11x17-inch fold-out pages at the end of each chapter where they are referenced.

Chapter 1 Endnotes

- ¹ Table of listed properties, National Register Database and Research, National Register of Historic Places, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm>, accessed 17 Jan. 2024; and Blanche Higgins Schroer and S. Sydney Bradford, "Stephen T. Mather House (The Mather Homestead) National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form," prepared 1963, listed Nov. 24, 1978.
- ² Charles A. Birnbaum, with Christine Capella Peters, *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, (Washington DC, 1996): 5, and Robert R. Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*, U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Program (Washington DC: 1998), 12.
- ³ Robert R. Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*, U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Program (Washington DC: 1998), 12.
- ⁴ Charles A. Birnbaum, with Christine Capella Peters, *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, (Washington DC, 1996).



- KEY:**
- EXISTING 1FT CONTOUR
 - DECIDUOUS TREE
 - EVERGREEN TREE
 - ORNAMENTAL TREE
 - STUMP
 - MEADOW
 - TURF MOWN
 - VEGETATED BED
 - MIXED NATIVE/INVASIVE UNDERSTORY
 - ASPHALT
 - BRICK
 - STONE WALK
 - GRAVEL PATH
 - MULCH PATH
 - SPLIT RAIL FENCE
 - STONE WALL
 - WETLAND BOUNDARY
 - WETLAND SETBACK
 - TOWN BOUNDARY
 - PARCEL BOUNDARY
 - PICNIC TABLE
 - BENCH
 - FREE LITTLE LIBRARY
- LCA AREAS**
- DOMESTIC GROUNDS, SUNKEN GARDEN & HOUSE SURROUNDS
 - CULTIVATED GARDENS, PASTURE AND BARN SURROUNDS
 - LARGE-SCALE CROP PRODUCTION AND WOODLANDS



MATHER HOMESTEAD CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

Darien, Connecticut

Client
Mather Homestead
19 Stephen Mather Road, Darien Connecticut 06820

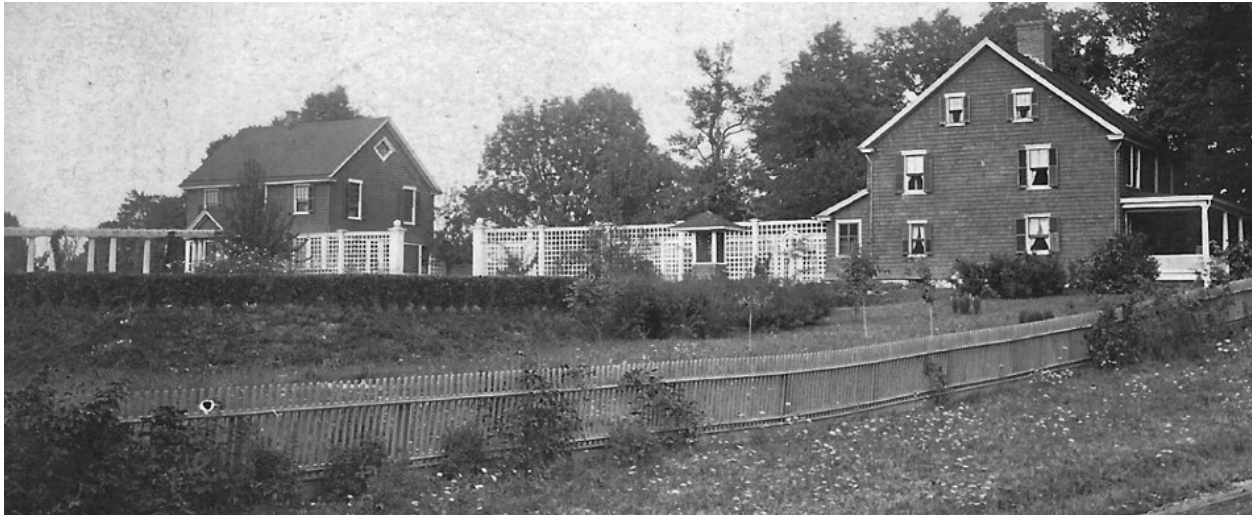
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Drawing Title:
**L1 Landscape
Character Areas**

Date:
January 2024

Mather Homestead ♦ Cultural Landscape Report

2 ♦ Landscape History & Evolution



A. Introduction to Mather Homestead Landscape History & Evolution

The Mather Homestead property, at its greatest historic extent, included land within the present-day boundaries of Darien, Norwalk, and New Canaan, Connecticut. The core property and Main House are located at the extreme northeast corner of the township of Darien. The town of Darien is located in southwestern Fairfield County, which is itself located at the southwestern panhandle of Connecticut.

The first section of this chapter delves into the early and contextual history of land use and settlement patterns around the Mather Homestead. Early history, prior to the establishment of the Mather Homestead, address pre-contact Indigenous cultural patterns, English and Dutch colonization, government actions, and industrial impacts that shaped the area of present-day Darien up until the early twentieth century.

The second section of this history explores the Mather family's early years in southwestern Connecticut, beginning with the Reverend Dr. Moses Mather and his role in Middlesex Parish, which would eventually become the town of Darien. In 1778, Deacon Joseph Mather, the youngest son of Moses Mather, built the Mather Homestead on 100 acres of inherited land. The Homestead was a working farm that supported a generally self-sufficient lifestyle for Deacon Joseph, his wife Sarah Scott, and their eleven children. The Homestead remained in Mather family ownership throughout the next four generations, during which time the town of Darien underwent significant changes. These developments were reflected in the lifestyles of the Mather family and in the evolving landscape of the Homestead, which gradually transformed from a self-sufficient farm to a summer home.

The third section of this chapter focuses on the Mather Homestead under Stephen Tyng Mather's ownership, from 1905 to 1929. Stephen Mather is notable for his role as the founding director of the National Park Service. The Homestead served as Stephen Mather's summer home until his death. The property was inherited in 1930 by his daughter, Bertha Mather. One of Connecticut's first female architects and a conservation enthusiast, Bertha and her husband, Edward McPherson, lived year-round at the Homestead for the remainder of their lives. The property was inherited by their three children and remained in the family until 2017, when it was donated to the Mather Homestead Foundation.

B. Geology, Pre-Contact History, Colonial Years & Darien Context

B1. Geology and Paleo-environment

The geology and topography of the western Connecticut coastline is the result of plate tectonics, erosion, and glacial activity. The collision and fragmentation of ancient supercontinent Pangaea, roughly 250 million to 145 million years ago, formed the region's highlands and rift valleys. During the Last Glacial Maximum, roughly 25,000 years ago, a massive ice sheet extended from Canada to a terminal moraine of deposited sediment which formed Long Island. As the ice sheet gradually receded, around 17,500 years ago, it scoured north-south channels in the bedrock. Rivers of meltwater moved along these channels, causing further erosion of the irregular coastline, and entering the Long Island Sound basin to form Glacial Lake Connecticut. This glacial lake drained around 15,500 years ago, only for rising sea levels to again inundate the basin and create natural harbors in eroded river valleys. As sea levels rose, so did sediments in the Long Island Sound basin, allowing for the development of salt marshes and estuaries along the submerged coastline beginning around 5,000 years ago. While the shoreline is bedrock-dominated, the retreating glacier deposited a layer of finely crushed rock, known as glacial till, in the western Connecticut uplands.¹

Darien, Norwalk, and New Canaan are part of Connecticut's Western Coastal Slope, a geographic region defined by the Connecticut Historical Commission in 1996. Extending from the New York State border to New Haven, this area is approximately 40 miles in length and descends over a width of ten miles from an elevation of 500 feet to sea level. The western basin of the Long Island Sound and many coastal towns in this region are sheltered by the natural barrier of Long Island. Soils in Connecticut's Western Coastal Slope are especially fertile due to high lime content from glacially deposited sediment.² These soil conditions and the region's topography influenced traditional Native American lifeways prior to European colonization and attracted Dutch and English settlers to the region by the 1640s.

B2. Indigenous Pre-Contact History

The earliest archaeological evidence for human occupation in present-day Connecticut dates to approximately 10,200 years ago. Although settlement patterns in this Paleoindian period are still poorly understood, the evidence suggests that groups were highly mobile, moving seasonally in relation to food supply. In the ensuing Archaic Period (9,000 to 2,700 BP) and Woodland Period (2,700 to 350 BP), settlement patterns shifted from seasonal camps and temporary sites to more permanent villages.³

In late Woodland, pre-Contact periods, indigenous settlements in Connecticut were concentrated around major rivers and floodplains. Lifeways were characterized by more intensive agriculture, larger permanent villages, and temporary task-related use of upland areas.⁴ Five archeological surveys in Darien, conducted between 1970 and 2010, have resulted in the recordation of 12 pre-contact archaeological sites in coastal and upland areas of the town. These sites date from the Archaic and Woodland periods. Largely related to habitation and resource use, the sites consist primarily of camps and temporary sites. None of these sites is listed in the National Register. No post-contact period sites have been recorded in Darien. In a 2010 assessment, approximately 7,802 acres, or 94 percent of the land area of Darien, was assessed as being "sensitive for potentially significant Native American and Euro-American archaeological sites."⁵ The remaining 454 acres (6 percent) within Darien were not assessed as archaeologically sensitive in previous surveys.

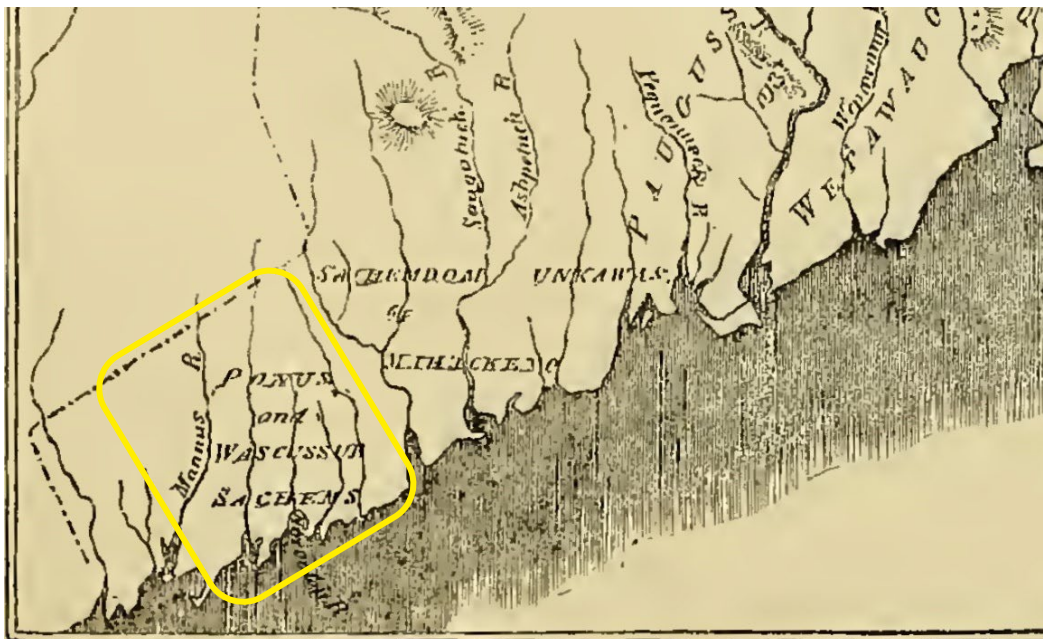


Figure 2.1b Detail of DeForest’s map of indigenous groups in Connecticut, published 1630 in *History of the Indians of Connecticut*. The territories of Siwanoy leaders Ponus and Wascussee are identified in the southwestern panhandle of the state, near the Noroton River. Courtesy LOC.

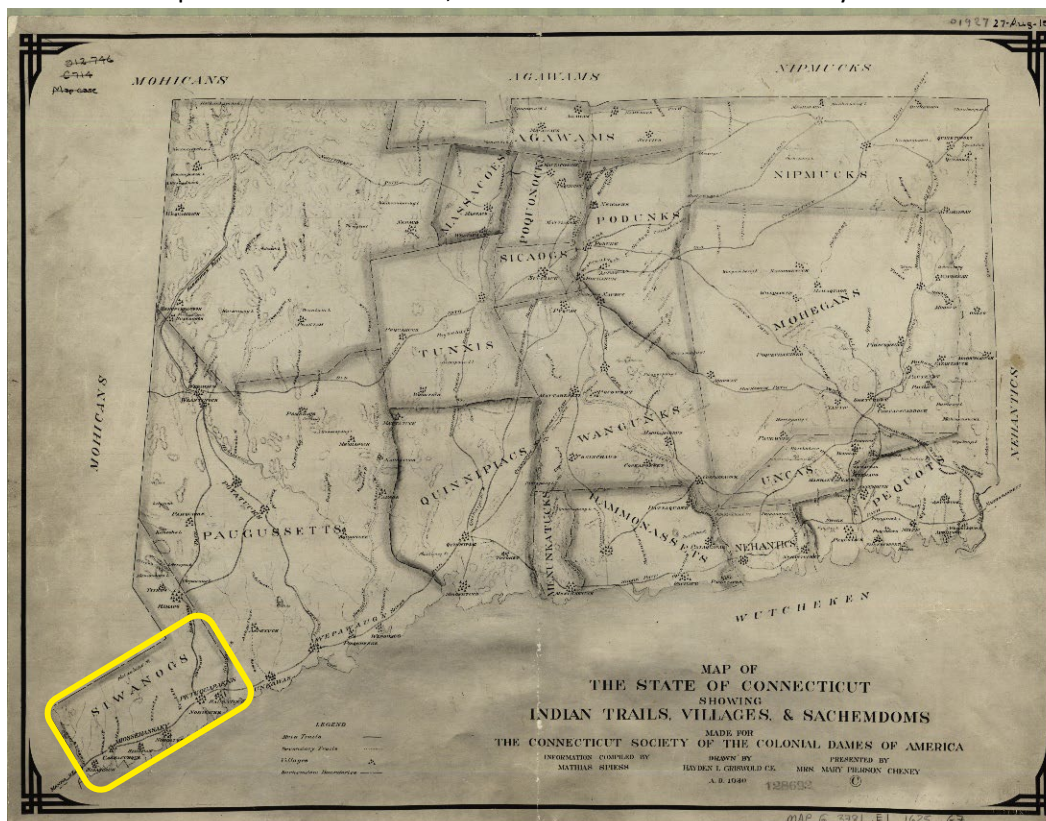


Figure 2.2a ‘Map of the State of Connecticut Showing Indian Trails, Villages, & Sachemdoms,’ drawn by Hayden L. Griswold, 1930.¹⁰ Courtesy UCONN.

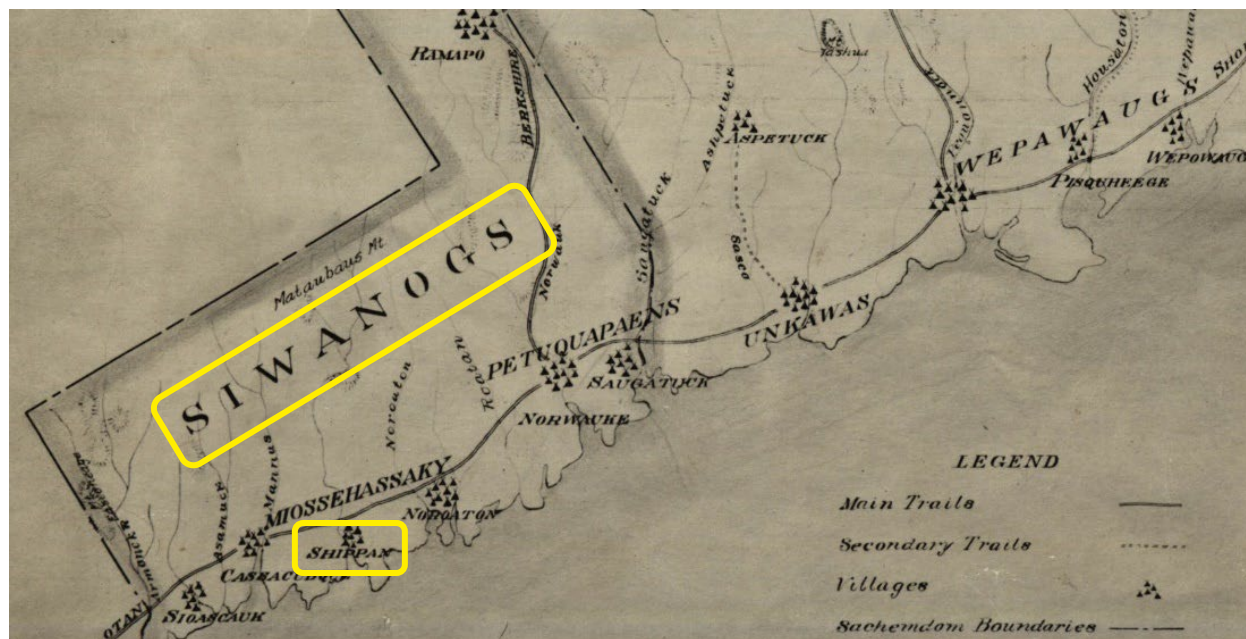


Figure 2.2b Detail of Griswold's map. In the southwestern panhandle of the state, Griswold identifies the sachemdom of the 'Siwanogs' [sic] and several settlements along the coastline, including Shippan, where Siwanoy leader Wascussee was sagamore in 1640. Courtesy UCONN.

B3. Colonial History of Connecticut

1614 Dutch explorer Adriaen Block sails along the Connecticut coast and up the Connecticut River.¹¹

1631 The English lay claim to what is now southeastern Connecticut.

1633 The Dutch establish Fort Good Hope, also known as House of Hope, in present-day Hartford.

1636 Thomas Hooker and a group of Puritan settlers from Massachusetts Bay Colony establish the town of Hartford.

The English towns of Hartford, Windsor, and Wethersfield join to form the Connecticut Colony. Windsor was established in 1633, and Wethersfield the following year in 1634.

1636 The Pequot War is fought by the Pequot people against English settlers from Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, and Saybrook Colonies and their Native allies. This conflict culminated with the Treaty of Hartford in 1638, which sought to formally abolish the Pequot tribe and secure Connecticut's authority, significantly influenced the trajectory of English colonization in southern New England.¹²

1638 The New Haven Colony is established by John Davenport, Theophilus Eaton, and a group of fellow Puritans.

1640 Captain Nathaniel Turner of the New Haven Colony signs a deed agreement with two Siwanoy leaders: Wascussee, sagamore at *Shippan*, and Ponus, sagamore at either *Poningo* or *Toquam*. The Siwanoy leaders likely do not understand the terms of this deed, which transfers ownership to the New Haven Colony of land comprising present-day Darien, Stamford, and western New Canaan, and Pound Ridge and Bedford in New York.¹³

Several months later, a group of colonists from Wethersfield form the Rippowam Company to purchase land from the New Haven Colony in a transaction known as the Rippowam purchase. The eastern boundary of this tract is Pine Brook, now known as Goodwives River.¹⁴

Settlers from Massachusetts purchase the land comprising present-day Norwalk, Connecticut, from a Norwalke sachem named Mahackemo in two transactions between 1640 and 1641.¹⁵ Actual English settlement does not begin until 1649.

- 1642** The Rippowam Company purchases a tract of land from Piamikin, sagamore of Roaton. This purchase included the area that is now the Tokenoke neighborhood of Darien, extending east of Pine Brook (Goodwives River) to Fivemile River. The growing settlement is renamed Stamford.¹⁶
- 1649** Homesteaders from Hartford settle in present-day Norwalk, Connecticut, and incorporate as a town two years later in 1651.¹⁷
- 1650** The Dutch officially relinquish their claims in the Connecticut River Valley to the English.¹⁸
- 1665** The New Haven Colony unites with the Connecticut Colony.¹⁹
- 1666** The boundaries of New Haven and Fairfield Counties are established.²⁰

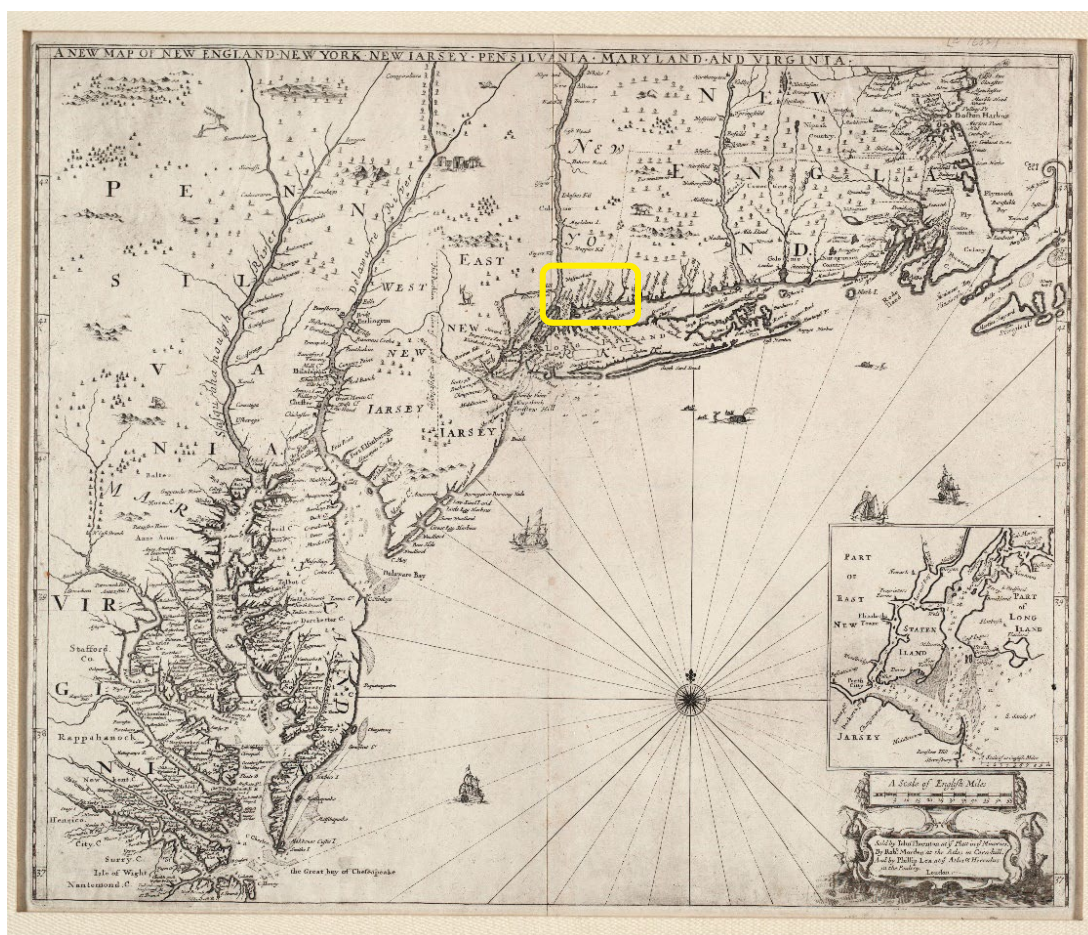


Figure 2.3a 1685 Thornton, Morden & Lea 'A New Map of New England, New York, New Jarsey [sic], Pensilvania [sic], Maryland, and Virginia.' Courtesy BPL.



Figure 2.3b Detail of 1685 Thornton, Morden & Lea map. The towns Rye, Greenwich and Stamford are shown with Newark and Fairfield, located on either side of a river. Courtesy BPL.

B4. Development of Darien in Context, Eighteenth Century to Late Twentieth Century

- 1700** The first roads are established in the area of present-day Darien, and the pace of 18th century development increases.
- 1731** The Connecticut legislature establishes a new Congregational parish, called Canaan Parish, at the northern border of the towns of Norwalk and Stamford.
- 1737** The Connecticut legislature forms Middlesex Parish, an area formerly part of the Stamford Parish, and allows residents to establish their own Congregational church and self-governance. Middlesex Parish comprises the area of present-day Darien.²¹
- 1775** The American Revolutionary War begins at the Battles of Lexington and Concord. The war continues until the Treaty of Paris in 1783.
- 1801** New Canaan is incorporated as a town, officially separating from Stamford and Norwalk.
- 1820** Darien is incorporated as a town.
- 1849** The New York and New Haven Railroad first scheduled line runs through Darien. The commercial center of Darien shifts from the harbor by Gorham's Mill to a new railroad station at the Post Road crossing.²²
- 1876-1900** In the decades following the Civil War (1861-65) and post-war Reconstruction, the United States experiences rapid industrial growth. Railroads expand throughout the country, and a wealthy class of industrialists emerges.²³
- 1900-1930** Newly affluent New York families begin building estates and summer homes in neighborhoods of Darien, including Tokeneke, Long Neck Point, and Noroton, as well as in other southwestern Connecticut towns on the Long Island Sound.²⁴

1945 to 1970 Suburban development increases post-WWII. Darien's year-round population and general prosperity of Darien grows as many families relocate from New York City and other metropolitan areas. Due to the town's proximity to New York, it quickly becomes a 'bedroom community,' with the majority of its residents commuting to the city for work.²⁵



Figure 2.4a 1777 map of 'Connecticut and parts adjacent' by Covens & Mortier & Covens Junior and Bernard Romans. The parishes of Middlesex and New Canaan appear on this map within Fairfield County. Courtesy LOC.



Figure 2.4b Detail of 1777 map showing Darien area between the towns of Stamford and Norwalk
 Courtesy LOC.

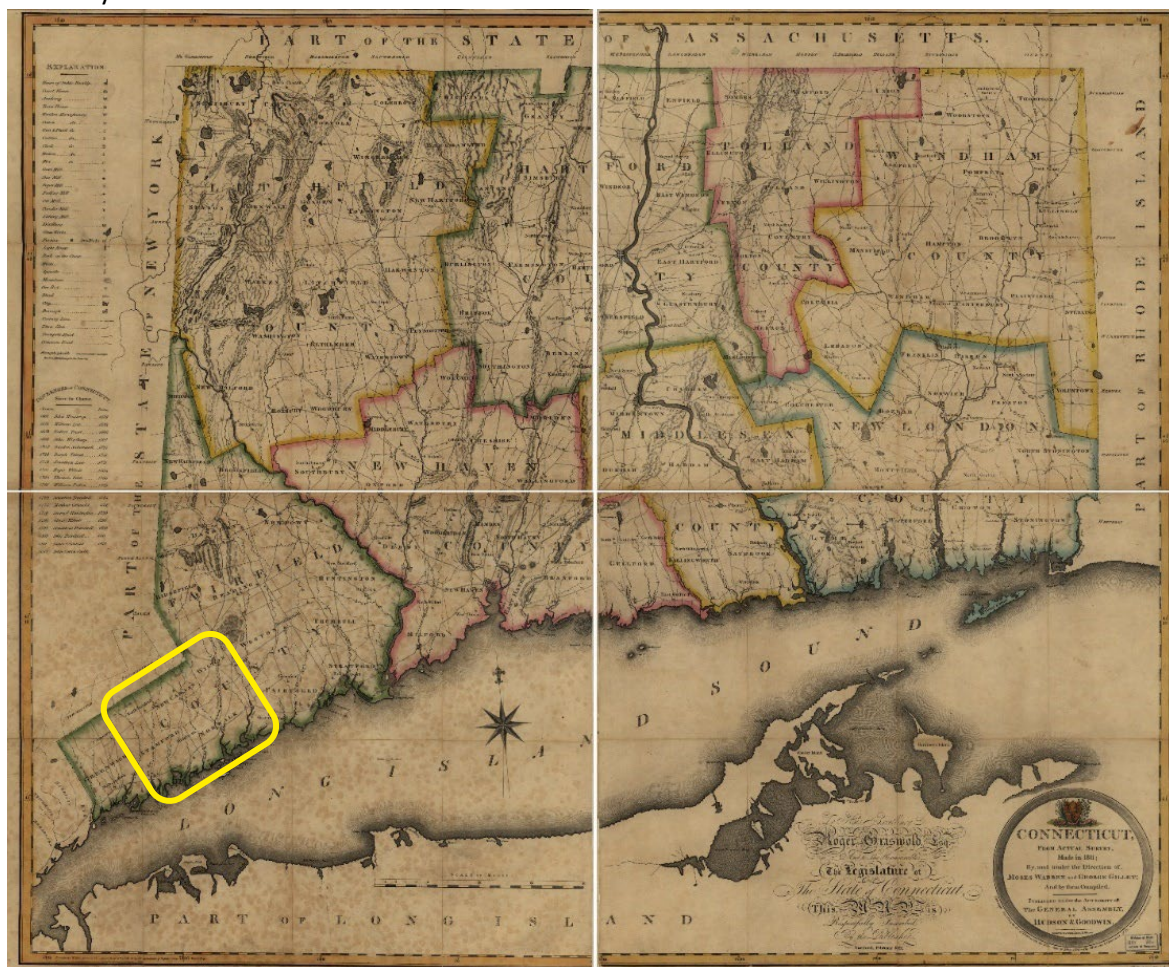


Figure 2.5a 1812 map of Connecticut by Roger Griswold. Middlesex Parish is still present, while New Canaan now appears as a town. Courtesy UCONN.

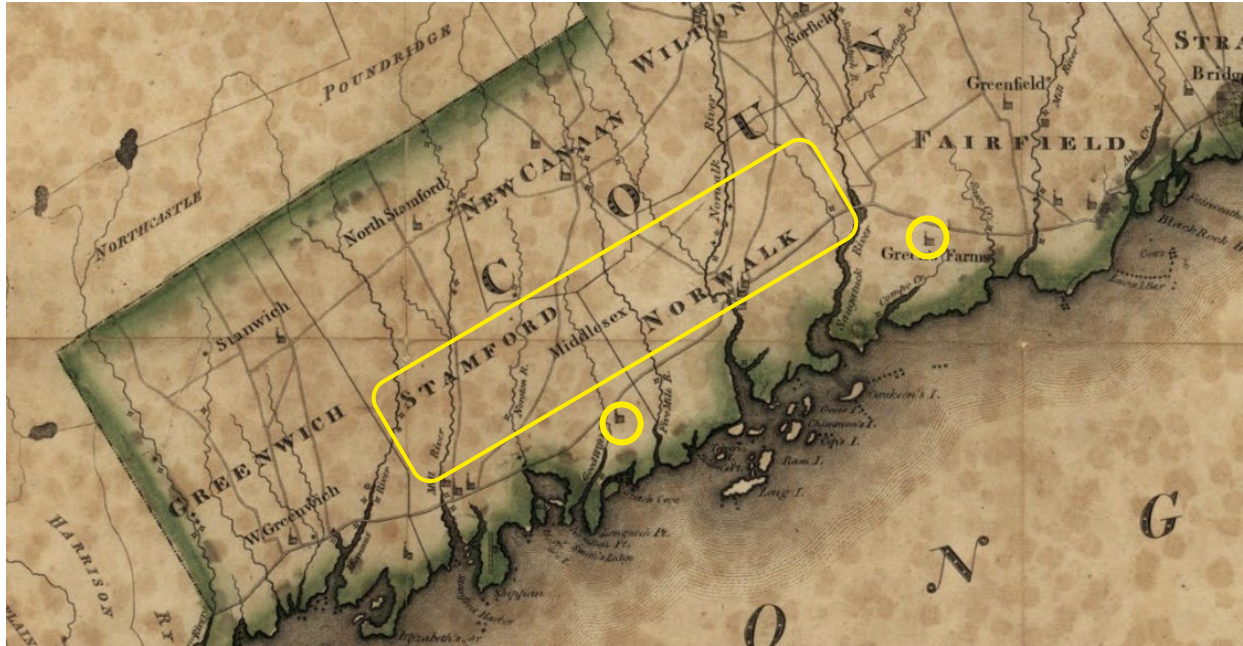


Figure 2.5b Detail of Griswold's 1812 map of Connecticut. Middlesex Parish is identified, and the Congregational Church is shown east of Goodwive River. Other symbols in the area of present-day Darien and nearby towns indicate grist mills, fulling (fabric) mills, and saw mills. Courtesy UCONN.

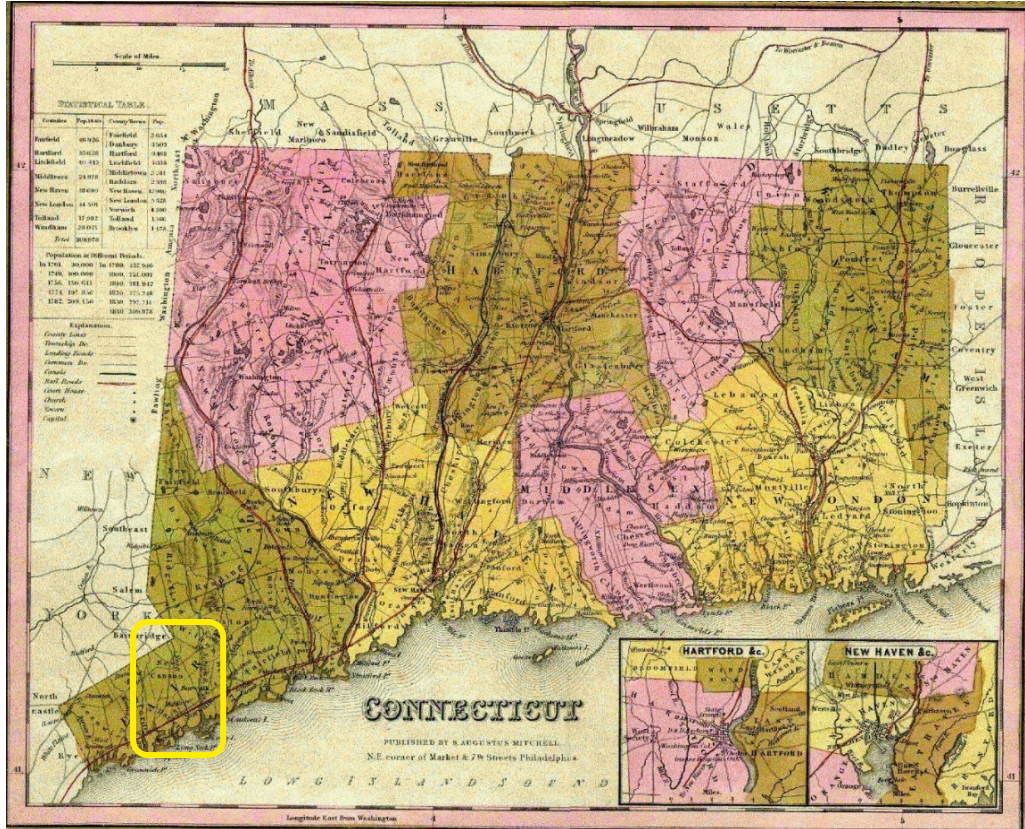


Figure 2.6a Circa 1850 map of Connecticut by S. Augustus Mitchell. The towns of New Canaan and Darien are both shown. Courtesy UCONN.



Figure 2.6b Detail of ca. 1850 Mitchell map of Connecticut showing the towns of New Canaan and Darien between Stamford and Norwalk in Fairfield County. The New York New Haven Railroad, indicated by a red line, runs along the southwestern Connecticut coast. Courtesy UCONN.



Figure 2.7 This overall 1934 aerial shows the development of Darien in the early to mid-twentieth century. The Mather Homestead is highlighted in a yellow square. To the south, Mathers Pond is visible as a dark oblong shape. To the west, the north-south spine of Mansfield Avenue (Route 124) appears. The landscape of this northeastern corner of Darien is a patchwork of residential properties, fields, and woodlands, woven together by networks of streams and roads. Courtesy CT State Library.



Figure 2.8 This 1965 aerial photograph of Darien captures the addition of the Country Club of Darien, located southwest of the Mather Homestead, signifying the rising socioeconomic status of the town. The Homestead is highlighted in a yellow square. To the southeast, the wide corridor of I-95 appears, with the narrow Old Post Road running nearly parallel to the north. Courtesy CT State Library.



Figure 2.9 1990 aerial of Darien. The Mather Homestead and pond are highlighted in a yellow rectangle. Like in the 1965 photograph, the fields to the north of the Main House and across Stephen Mather Road to the south remain undeveloped. Courtesy UCONN.

C. Mather Family in Darien and Mather Homestead Early Decades, 1744 to 1905

C1. Reverend Moses Mather and Middlesex Parish, 1744 to 1806

1744 Reverend Dr. Moses Mather becomes the first minister of the Middlesex Ecclesiastical Society, now the First Congregational Church of Darien.²⁶

1746 Rev. Dr. Moses Mather marries Hannah Bell. They reside in present-day Darien and have five children before Hannah's death in 1755. Rev. Moses Mather remarries twice and has five more children. He serves as minister of Middlesex Parish until his death in 1806.²⁷

The Mathers were a prominent family in Puritan New England. The Reverend Richard Mather and his family left England for the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1635, during the peak years of Puritan migration to the colonies. Several subsequent generations of men in the Mather family were also Puritan ministers, including Richard's son, Increase Mather (1639-1723), and his grandson, Cotton Mather (1663-1728). Another of Richard Mather's sons, Timothy Mather, did not become a minister and instead established a family farm in Lyme, Connecticut. For two generations, Mathers continued to farm in Lyme. Although Moses Mather (1718-1806) grew up on the family farm, he returned to his great-great-grandfather's vocation. After graduating from Yale Divinity School in 1739, Moses Mather was ordained as a Congregational minister. In 1744, he began preaching at Middlesex Parish Church in present-day Darien.

In 1746, Moses Mather married Hannah Bell. They had five children before Hannah's death in 1755, the youngest of whom was Joseph Mather. Moses remarried twice, having additional children in both marriages, and served as minister of Middlesex Parish until his death in 1806.



Figure 2.10 Photograph of a 1930s mural painted in Darien Town Hall, originally a school building. The mural depicts the 1781 raid of Middlesex Parish, when Rev. Dr. Moses Mather, seen at the pulpit, and members of his congregation were taken captive by a party of Tories from Long Island. Courtesy MHF.

C2. Deacon Joseph Mather and Sarah Scott: The First Homestead Generation, 1778 to 1842

- 1778** The Mather Homestead is built by Deacon Joseph Mather, the youngest son of Moses Mather and Hannah Bell, on 100 acres of land inherited from his mother. Joseph Mather, a deacon in Middlesex Parish, and Sarah Scott, his wife, raise their eleven children in the house.²⁸ The farm provides wood to heat the house; vegetables; flax; wheat; and milk, eggs, and meat from livestock.²⁹
- 1781** The Mather family had offered their Homestead as a place of safekeeping for neighbors' valuables during the Revolutionary War. In 1781, the British raided the Homestead and located the silver, clothing, and other valuables hidden at the bottom of the garden well. Reverend Moses Mather, who was preaching in the Middlesex Parish Church, was taken prisoner by the Tories along with other men from the Congregation.
- 1783** In a series of nine transactions between 1783 and 1827, Deacon Joseph Mather purchases a total of approximately 122 acres of land from various landowners, including his sister, Hannah, and her husband. Several of these parcels are located south of the Mather Homestead, and two parcels are called 'Salt Meadow.' These purchases bring Deacon Joseph Mather's maximum total holdings to more than 222 acres.³⁰ Further research of deeds and land records is needed to understand the subsequent decrease in Deacon Joseph Mather's land from this maximum of 222 acres to just 60 acres by 1840.
- 1830c.** Deacon Joseph Mather writes an eight-page argument for immediate emancipation of enslaved people, to be delivered at a debate which likely took place in the late 1830s.³¹
- 1840** An inventory of Deacon Joseph Mather's real estate holdings concludes that he owns 53 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres. He had already deeded five acres each to two of his sons, Joseph and Moses. The 53-acre total excludes the Main House, auxiliary buildings, and yards of the Homestead which, if added, bring the total to approximately 60 acres.³²

In Deacon Joseph Mather's will, these 60 acres were divided among his ten living children, each of whom received varying amounts of land. The Homestead property, which was bequeathed to Rana and Phoebe Mather, was reduced to approximately 12 acres.³³

Joseph Mather, son of Rev. Moses Mather, was a deacon at Middlesex Parish. Descending from a lineage of both Puritan ministers and farmers, Joseph would also build the Mather Homestead in 1778.

Like his father, Deacon Joseph Mather was a proponent of American independence and fought in several Revolutionary War campaigns. After serving in 1775 and 1776, he returned home in 1777 and married Sarah Scott of Ridgefield, Connecticut. The following year, in 1778, Joseph inherited 100 acres of land from his mother, Hannah Bell. Situated at the extreme northeast corner of present-day Darien, far from the Boston Post Road, this property seemed the ideal location to raise a family and avoid Tory raids during the ongoing Revolution.³⁴ Deacon Joseph Mather built the Mather Homestead in 1778.

Deacon Joseph Mather and his wife, Sarah Scott, had eleven children. Their first child, Clara, died in infancy in 1786, before the Homestead was established. Their ten other children were born and raised at the Homestead. Joseph fought in additional Revolutionary campaigns in 1779 and 1780, returning to the Homestead between periods of service.³⁵ In the late eighteenth century, the Homestead landscape was a

productive 100-acre farm. As was typically the case with New England colonial families, the Mathers were largely self-sufficient. The farm provided flax and wheat; vegetables; wood for heating; and milk, eggs, and meat from livestock.³⁶ Game animals were also plentiful and supplemented the farm diet.³⁷

Family roles in the homesteading lifestyle were strictly gendered. In a centennial address written by Charles Selleck, a Mather descendant, he describes Deacon Joseph Mather as an “industrious cultivator of the soil” while Sarah Scott was the “faithful, careful and constant housekeeper and nurse.” The sons of the family worked the land, while the daughters cleaned the house, milked the cows, prepared the table and did everything else that daughters should do to minister to the comfort of weary ones as they came in from the toils of the farm.”³⁸ When Deacon Joseph Mather was away for extended periods of time during the Revolution, Sarah would remain at home with the children to run the household.

An inventory of Deacon Joseph Mather’s estate in 1840 offers insights into the Mather Homestead property and its surrounding landscape. The core Homestead property appears to have included several yards, adjacent to the house and barn, and other ancillary landscape structures like a wagon house, hog house, and horse shed. Other areas of the landscape were devoted to orchards. Also included in the inventory are several lots described as meadows; a “driftway,” or private lane; a wood lot; a north and south ridge lot; and a swamp (**Figure 2.11**). These listings provide a sense of the variable land use that characterized different areas of the Mather Homestead and the greater property owned by Deacon Joseph Mather.

25 Mar. 1840 Inventory this day accepted by the Court included the following real estate:	
South meadow 2 1/2 acres	-\$225.-
Meadow by the barn 1 acre	525.-
Brook lots and little meadow 4 acres	280.-
Driftway 3/4 acre	45.-
South ridge lot 5 1/2 acres	-368.-
Swamp - 4 acres	-140.-
Lots west of swamp 14 acres	-560.-
North ridge lot 4 acres	200.-
Wood lot 10 acres	1000.-
Lot north of house 4 acres	300.-
East orchard - 2 acres	150.-
Orchard north of house 2 acres	160.-
House and yard	500.-
Barn and yard	70.-
Wagon house	15.-
Hog house	5.-
Horse shed	-10.-

Figure 2.11 An excerpt from the “Estate of Joseph Mather, Late of Darien, Deceased,” detailing an inventory of real estate included in the estate of Deacon Joseph Mather at the time of his death totals to 53.75 acres. Courtesy MHF.

C3. Rana Mather, Phebe Mather, and Betsy Lockwood: 1843 to 1885

1843 Rana and Phebe Mather, daughters of Deacon Joseph Mather, inherit the Homestead. Neither Rana nor Phebe ever marries, and they, along with Betsy Lockwood, their widowed sister, live at the Homestead until their deaths.³⁹

1886 The house is passed to Ann Elizabeth Lockwood, daughter of Betsy Lockwood and niece of Rana and Phebe Mather. Lockwood subsequently sells the property to Joseph Wakeman Mather within the year.

Upon his death, Deacon Joseph Mather bequeathed the Mather Homestead and twelve surrounding acres to his two unmarried daughters, Rana and Phebe. This parcel occupied the northwest corner of the intersection of Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads. The remaining 48 acres of Deacon Joseph Mather's estate were divided among his other children. Rana and Phebe lived out their lives at the Homestead along with their widowed sister, Betsy Lockwood. Rana and Phebe Mather appear as the 'Misses Mather' in an 1874 map of Darien, and the three women appear in an 1879 photograph (**Figures 2.12 and 2.13**). Little is known about the use of the Homestead landscape during Rana and Phebe's occupation of the house. Linen sheets belonging to Phebe Mather and Betsy Lockwood, apparently woven from flax grown on the Homestead, possibly indicate the continued productivity of the landscape, though it is unknown who, if anyone, worked the land (**Figure 2.14**).

In an 1877 letter, Anna Bell White, granddaughter of Deacon Joseph Mather, describes the view from the east window of the house: "I used to be able to see the Sound; but the old apple-tree [Sweet Bough] has grown so large that the sparkle of the bright blue water is hidden from me now."⁴⁰ Another change observed in this written account is development of the two roads adjacent to the Homestead. The author writes that, as initially constructed, the Homestead was set back approximately one mile from any public road. By 1877, the house stood at the intersection of what is now Brookside Road and Stephen Mather Road, one of which had formerly been a "cow-lane" in the author's childhood.⁴¹

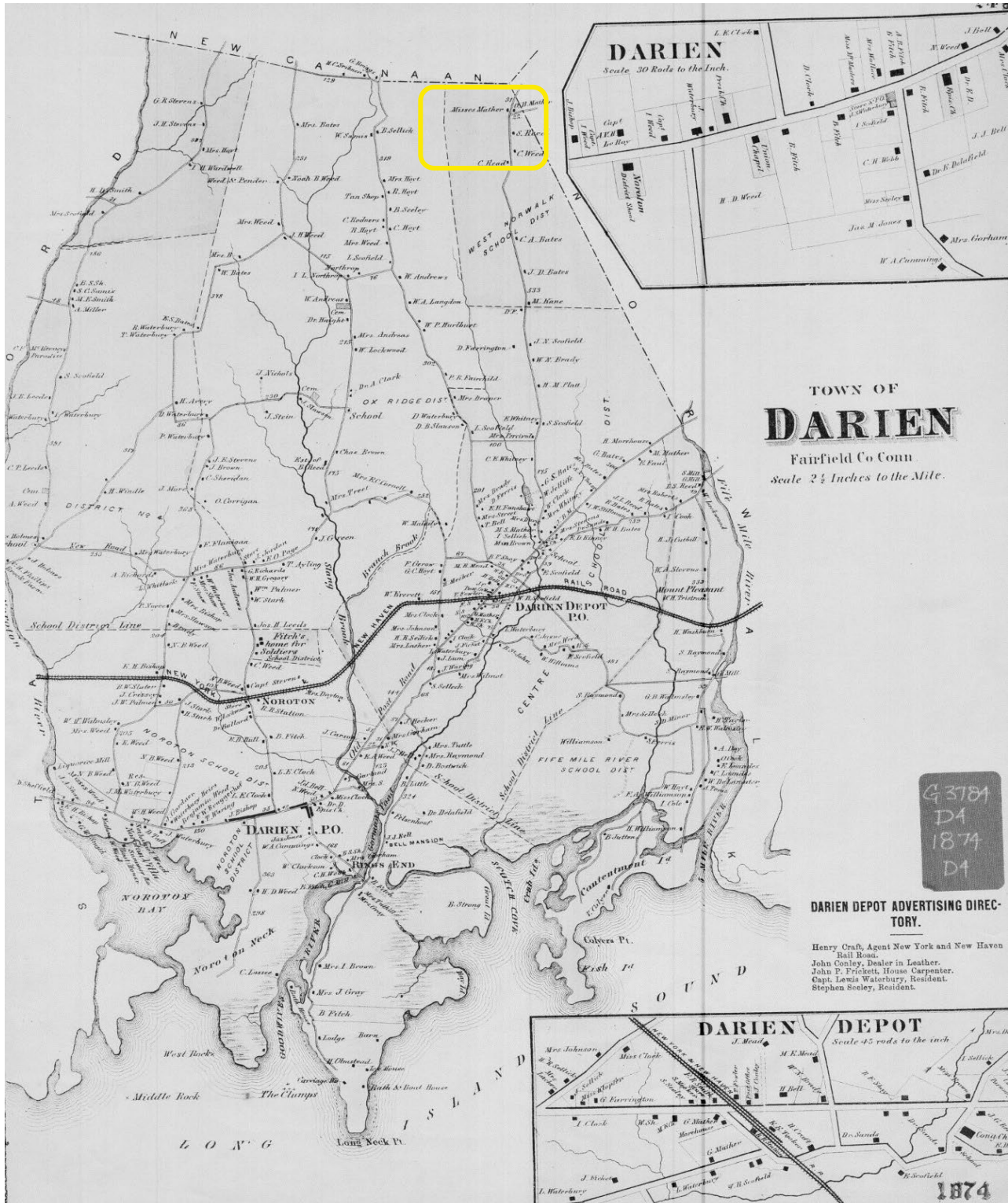


Figure 2.12a 1874 map of Darien. The New York-New Haven Railroad cuts across the town, running east to west. The Old Post Road, or the Boston Post Road, runs northeast from the Post Office. This map shows school districts, property owners, roadways, and rivers. The area around the Mather Homestead, located in the extreme northeast corner of Darien, is highlighted in yellow. Courtesy UCONN.

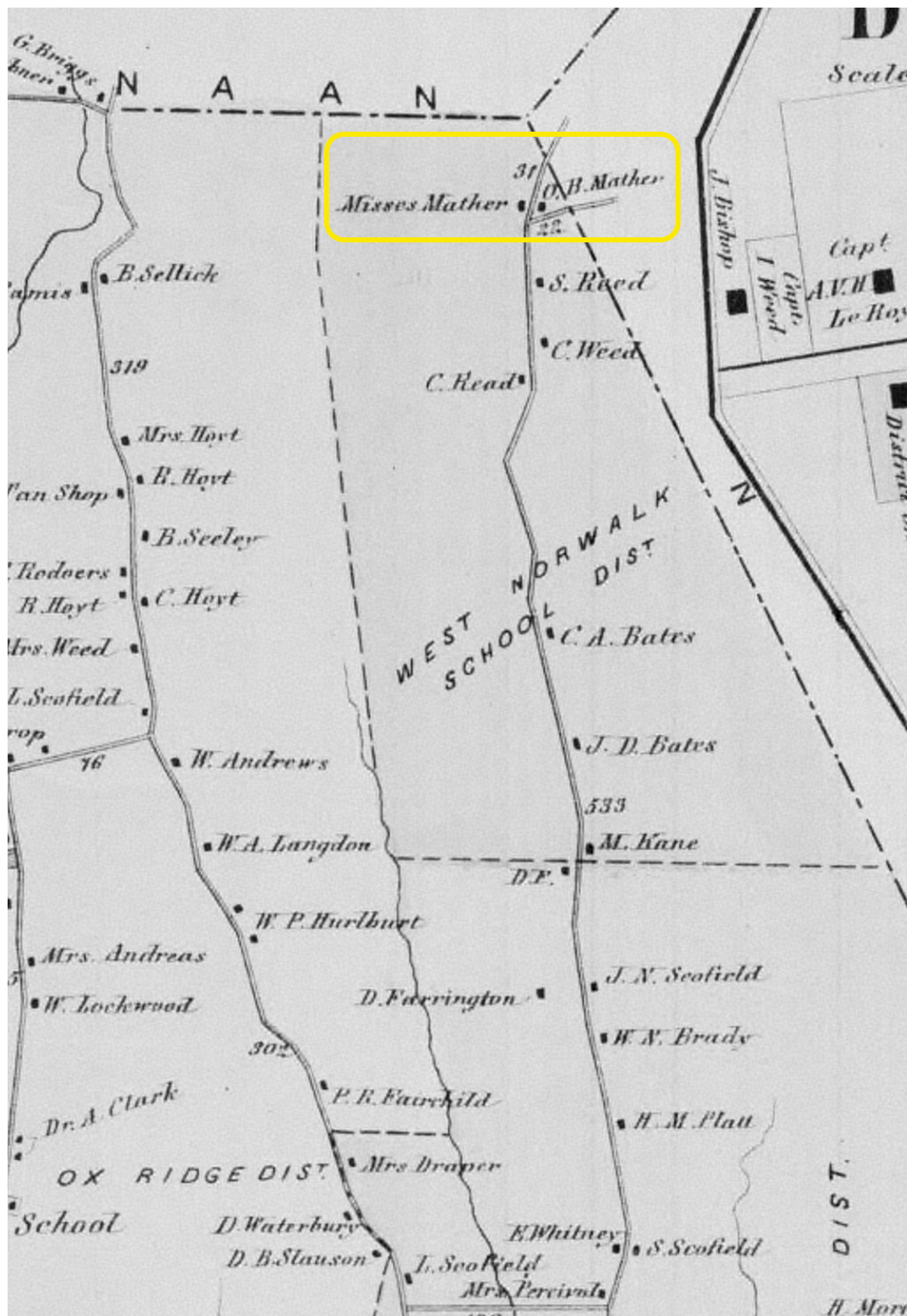


Figure 2.12b Detail of 1874 map of Darien. The Mather Homestead is located in the West Norwalk School District. Brookside Road runs north to south. The Homestead property, west of Brookside Road, is owned by Rana and Phebe Mather, or the 'Misses Mather.' Another member of the Mather family is identified on the east side of Brookside Road. Courtesy UCONN.



Figure 2.13 1879 photograph of Rana Mather, Phebe Mather, and Betsy Lockwood at the front entry of the Mather house, two standing and one seated in a chair. This winter view shows two deciduous trees near the fence in the foreground and several deciduous shrubs around the foundation. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.14 Two photographs of linen sheets, stored in the Mather Homestead attic, stitched with the initials of Phebe Mather (left) and Betsy Lockwood (right). An accompanying note states that the linen was woven from flax grown at the homestead. Courtesy MHF.

C4. Joseph Wakeman Mather, 1887 to 1905

- 1887** Joseph Wakeman Mather purchases the Mather Homestead, comprising twelve acres around the Main House, from Ann Elizabeth Lockwood. Joseph Wakeman and his family live in San Francisco and spend their summers at the Homestead.
- 1891** Joseph Wakeman Mather and William F. Mather, his brother, construct a new barn located 120 feet west of the house.
- 1905** A fire destroys the barn and the nearby greenhouse. The fire does not damage the Mather Homestead or a smaller house near the barn, occupied by the property caretaker, J. Darwin Bourger, and his wife.⁴²

Joseph W. Mather dies in August 1905, leaving the 22-acre Homestead property equally to his son, Stephen Tyng Mather, and to his niece, Bertha Carter Mather.

In 1887, less than a year after inheriting the property, Ann Elizabeth Lockwood sold the property to Joseph Wakeman Mather, the grandson of Deacon Joseph Mather. Joseph Wakeman Mather was born and raised in Darien, Connecticut. He married his first wife, Maria Mahan, in 1856, and their daughter, Ella Maria arrived in 1857. Following the death of Maria Mahan Mather, in 1859, and his daughter in 1861, Joseph Wakeman Mather remarried. He moved to San Francisco in 1864. Joseph Wakeman Mather and his second wife, Bertha Jemima Walker, had two children, Stephen Tyng Mather and Joseph Wakeman Mather, Jr. (**Figure 2.15**). After Stephen Tyng Mather graduated from University of California at Berkeley in 1887, Joseph Wakeman Mather relocated to New York City. He summered at the Mather Homestead, residing in New York during the winter.

In 1891, Joseph Wakeman Mather and his brother, William F. Mather, built a new barn to replace the existing structure, which dated to Deacon Joseph Mather's late 1770s or subsequent decades in the early construction of the Homestead. This new barn was sited approximately 120 feet west of the Main House (**Figures 2.16 and 2.17**).⁴³

Correspondence received and invoices paid by Joseph Wakeman Mather during the 1890s offer a glimpse into the activities of the Homestead in the late nineteenth century. Purchases from 1897 to 1898 include fertilizer, farm wagon, hay rake, bale ties, and hog feed. Plant purchases from a local nursery augmented the productive gardens with asparagus, rhubarb, raspberry, currant, and blackberry plants. An order for winemaking supplies documents the productive use of grape vines grown on the property. In an 1895 letter, Mary Smith, the wife of Frank Smith, the founder of Pacific Coast Borax and Joseph Wakeman Mather's employer, described tasting 'Mather Wine' made from grapes grown at the Homestead.⁴⁴

Published sources are also revealing. In a letter to the editor published in *The Norwalk Hour* on May 20, 1897, Joseph Wakeman Mather describes the success of the corn crop. The harvest had turned a profit, which Mather considered a high mark of success "for land that [had] been cropped for more than 100 years, and lying continuous to fields that are considered worn out and useless."⁴⁵ Other records note sales of carrots and turnips to local vendors. An invoice from a New York warehouse for winter storage for apricots, peaches, and prunes further supports the inferred conclusion that the Homestead produced a surplus of food relative to the family's needs. Although the Homestead remained a working landscape, it no longer supported a self-sufficient lifestyle. This generation of the Mather family did not live at the

Homestead year-round. The surplus of annual harvests was sold for profit or stored for winter use. The family supplemented their home-grown diet with outsourced meats, seafood, and produce, indicating their economic means. Testament to a surplus of available funds for goods, Joseph Wakeman Mather's bills also include purchases of designer clothing, an upright piano, and new furniture.⁴⁶

In 1905, a fire destroyed the barn built in 1891 by Joseph Wakeman and William Mather. A "lake near the house" had recently been let down in order to repair a dam downstream. Without a supply of water nearby, the barn burned to the ground. Although the Mathers' cow was led to safety, the fire killed two horses and destroyed the greenhouse and a Ford automobile. The fire did not damage the Main House or a smaller house near the barn, occupied by the caretaker, J. Darwin Bourger, and his wife.⁴⁷

In August 1905, shortly after the barn fire, Joseph Wakeman Mather died at the age of 85. He left the Mather Homestead in equal shares to his sole living son, Stephen Tyng Mather, and to his niece, Bertha Carter Mather.⁴⁸ A 1905 survey shows the organization and development of the Mather Homestead property when it was inherited by Stephen T. Mather (**Figure 2.18**).



Figure 2.15 Circa 1870 photograph of Joseph Wakeman Mather and his sons. Stephen Tyng Mather is pictured on the left. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.16 Circa 1900 photograph of the barn built by Joseph Wakeman Mather and William F. Mather. This original barn was located 120 feet west of the Main House. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.17 Circa 1905 photograph of house. Joseph Wakeman Mather's 1891 barn is present to the west (left). Fallen leaves cover the ground plane and several shrubs appear around the house. A vine climbs the west side of the portico. Courtesy MHF.

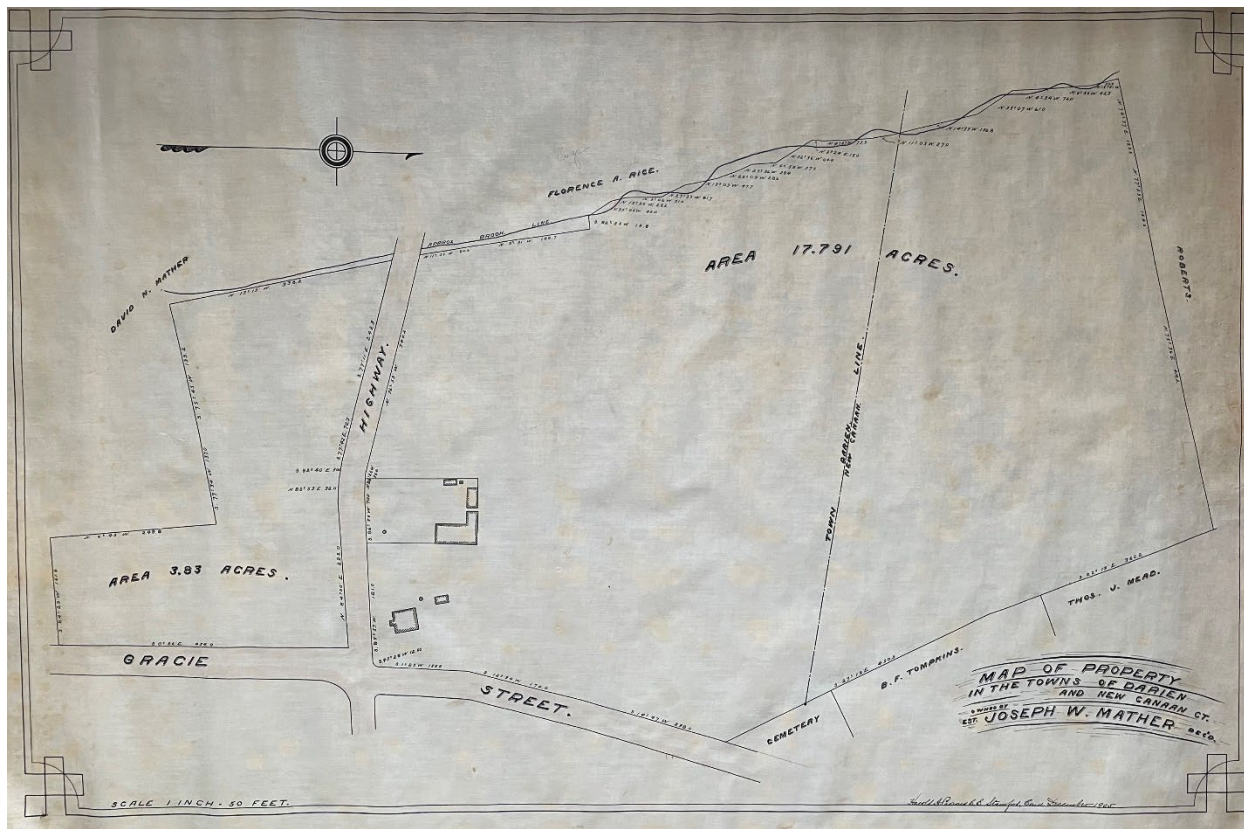


Figure 2.18 1905 Map of Property in the Towns of Darien and New Canaan CT. Owned by Est. Joseph W. Mather Dec'd, drawn by Harold Hassie. The Mather Homestead is situated at the northeast corner of the intersection between Gracie Street (now Brookside Road) and an unnamed "highway" (now Stephen Mather Road). To the southwest is the property of another Mather family member, David N. Mather. At the core of the Homestead property is the Main House, the wellhead, the greenhouse, and the barn, as well as several other small structures west of the Main House. Courtesy MHF.

D. Stephen Tying Mather, 1906 to 1929

- 1906** Stephen Tyng Mather purchases his cousin Bertha Carter Mather's share of the Homestead. He becomes the sole owner of 22 acres around the house, adding a caretaker's cottage and a barn.
- 1907** Stephen T. Mather and his wife, Jane Thacker Floy, along with their daughter, Bertha Floy Mather, spend their first summer at the Mather Homestead.
- 1909** Mather commissions noted landscape architect Walter Burley Griffin to design a Sunken Garden west of the Main House.
- 1915** Mather makes additional alterations to the Main House, adding a one-story screened porch to the northwest corner, extending the building west toward the garden.
- 1916** Mather purchases two tracts of land, totaling approximately 71+ acres, from his cousin David N. Mather.⁴⁹ These lands are labeled tracts A₁, A₂, A₃, and B on a sketch drawn at a later date by Bertha Mather McPherson (Figure 2.32). The Homestead then includes some 93 acres.
- 1921** Mathers Pond Dam is constructed under supervision of designer Major William A. Welch, Chief Engineer of the Palisades Interstate Parkway Commission.⁵⁰
- 1927** Stephen Mather and architect Thomas Harlan Ellett design alterations to the house, to include a side porch, a two-story addition to the rear, and a redesigned portico over the main entrance.
- 1929** Mather constructs a new barn further west with an attached garage. A stone wellhead and wrought-iron frame replace the 1906 roof-and-lattice wooden wellhouse.

Mather purchases about four acres, bringing the total land of the Homestead to 98 acres.

Born in San Francisco in 1867, Stephen Tyng Mather attended the University of California at Berkeley (**Figure 2.19**). After graduating in 1887, Mather worked for several years as a reporter for the *New York Sun* before joining his father in working for the New York-based Pacific Coast Borax Company, where he developed a successful advertising campaign that made the Borax company a household name. Mather left Pacific Coast Borax in 1904 to join a friend in forming the Thorkildsen-Mather Borax Company. In 1905, Stephen Mather inherited eleven acres of the Mather Homestead from his father, Joseph Wakeman Mather, who had left equal shares of the property to his son and to his niece, Bertha Carter Mather. In 1906, Stephen Mather purchased his cousin's land, bringing his total property to 22 acres.

By 1914, his company's success had made Mather a millionaire, allowing him to retire at the age of forty-seven. That same year, on a visit to Yosemite and Sequoia, two of the nation's few western national parks, Mather found the parks to be undermanaged and ill-protected. He wrote a critical letter to Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane, a friend of Mather's from college. Lane replied, "Dear Steve, if you don't like the way the national parks are being run, come on down to Washington and run them yourself." In 1915, Mather accepted the offer and became assistant to the Secretary of the Interior. He began an influential campaign for the national parks, garnering Congressional and public interest (**Figure 2.20**). He simultaneously led efforts to create a park bureau, leading to President Woodrow Wilson's authorization of the National Park Service within the Dept. of the Interior in 1916. Stephen T. Mather served as the first director of the National Park Service from 1916 until 1929. Under his direction, the total area of national parks in the U.S. doubled and the number of monuments exponentially increased.



Figure 2.19 Undated portrait of Stephen Tyng Mather. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.20 From left to right, U.S. Congressman William Kent, Bertha Floy Mather, and Stephen Tyng Mather on horseback, circa 1920s. Courtesy MHF.

During his adult life, Stephen Mather and his family spent their summers at the Mather Homestead. Upon becoming the sole owner of the Homestead property in 1906, Mather made several changes to the Main House and the surrounding landscape. He altered the front porch and built a caretaker's cottage and a new barn, located further from the house than the former structure built by his father (**Figure 2.21**).⁵¹ Stephen Mather and his family first occupied the Homestead in the summer of 1907. A ca. 1906-07 photograph of the Mather family standing on the road in front of the Homestead shows the south façade of the Main House, where a wide front porch replaced the former hip roof portico (**Figure 2.22**). Although primarily a summer home for Stephen Mather, the Homestead property continued to function, as it did historically, as a family residence and a productive landscape. Circa 1906-12 images show Stephen Mather and his daughter, Bertha Mather, at work in the landscape (**Figures 2.23 and 2.24**).

In 1909, Mather commissioned landscape architect Walter Burley Griffin to design a Sunken Garden west of the house. Griffin produced a plan which shows the proposed garden in relation to the overall Homestead property (**Figure 2.25**). Despite the deteriorated quality of the surviving microfiche plan, it offers an understanding of the general arrangements of vegetation, land use, and landscape structures on the Homestead property in 1909. The greatest density of planting appears to be clustered in the vicinity of the Main House and along Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads. A vegetable garden and grape vines on a trellis-like structure are shown north of the house. The Main House and caretaker's cottage are obscured and illegible. The stadium shape of the Sunken Garden appears west of the house. North of the Sunken Garden is the stable, or barn. Clustered shrub plantings extend northeast from the barn. Additional masses of vegetation are identified at the northeast and northwest corners of the property, along the west property boundary, and in the field to the south across Stephen Mather Road.

Most of the alterations to the Homestead made by Stephen Mather in 1906 are documented in subsequent photographs. A circa 1912 photograph shows the west house façade and the adjacent lawn and garden as seen from Stephen Mather Road (**Figure 2.26**). A white latticework trellis extends north from the Main House and the guest house, with a wide opening where the gravel entry drive passes through. A wooden pergola extends west from the guest house, visually enclosing the garden from the rest of the property. The tall canopy heads of deciduous trees along Stephen Mather and Brookside Roads are seen behind the Main House. A second ca. 1912 photograph captures the Sunken Garden, where Jane and Bertha Mather are pictured with another woman and young boy (**Figure 2.27**). A circa 1910-15 photograph of Bertha Mather and a friend with her pony captures in the background the pergola extending from east to west between the barn and the caretaker's cottage (**Figure 2.28**).



Figure 2.21 Circa 1910 photograph of the barn built by Stephen Tyng Mather in 1906, viewed from the southeast. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.22 Circa 1906 photograph of Jane F. Mather holding Bertha Mather as an infant, standing with another unidentified woman at the gate in front of the Mather Homestead beside a horse-drawn carriage.⁵² A third figure is seen near the house. Two mature deciduous trees filter the view of the south façade and cast shade over the front yard. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.23 Circa 1908 photograph of Bertha Mather as a child, carrying a bucket along a worn dirt path. A man in the background holds a similar bucket, likely indicating activity related to the family livestock or productive land use on the Homestead. Courtesy McPherson-Nickerson family.



Figure 2.24 Circa 1906-10 photograph of Stephen Tyng Mather pitching hay onto a horse-drawn wagon. His daughter, Bertha Mather, is seated in front of him.⁵³ A line of tall pines and deciduous trees marks the boundary of the fields in the background. Courtesy McPherson-Nickerson family.

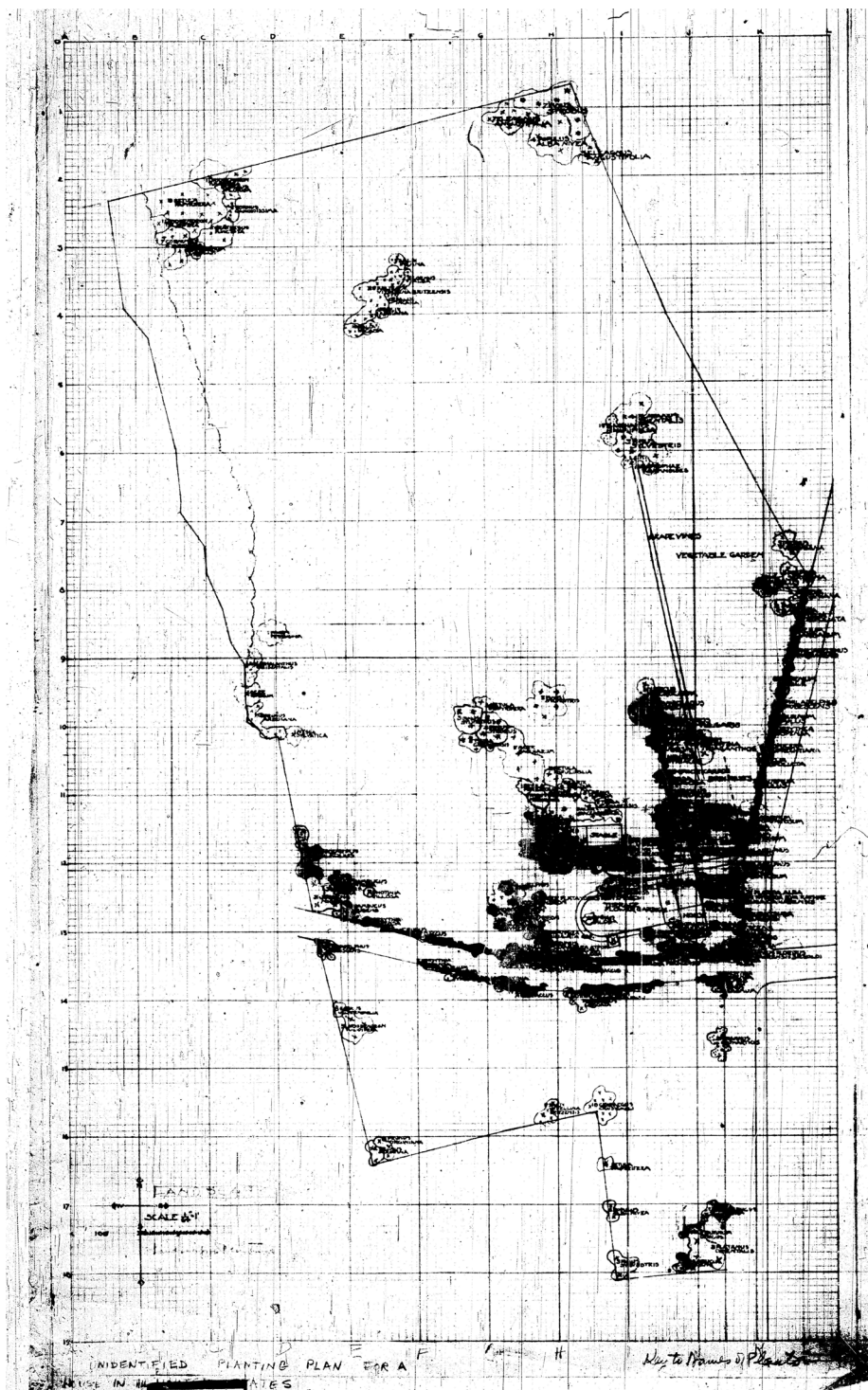


Figure 2.25a 1909 Walter Burley Griffin plan for the Mather Homestead, including the Sunken Garden. Although the plan is somewhat illegible, the concentration of ink indicates areas of dense vegetation or planting. The botanical names are indecipherable. However, there appears to be linear plantings along the west side of Brookside Road and intermittent planting on either side of Stephen Mather Road. Directly north of the house, the plan identifies a vegetable garden and grape vines along a trellis. See details in the following figure. Courtesy MHF.

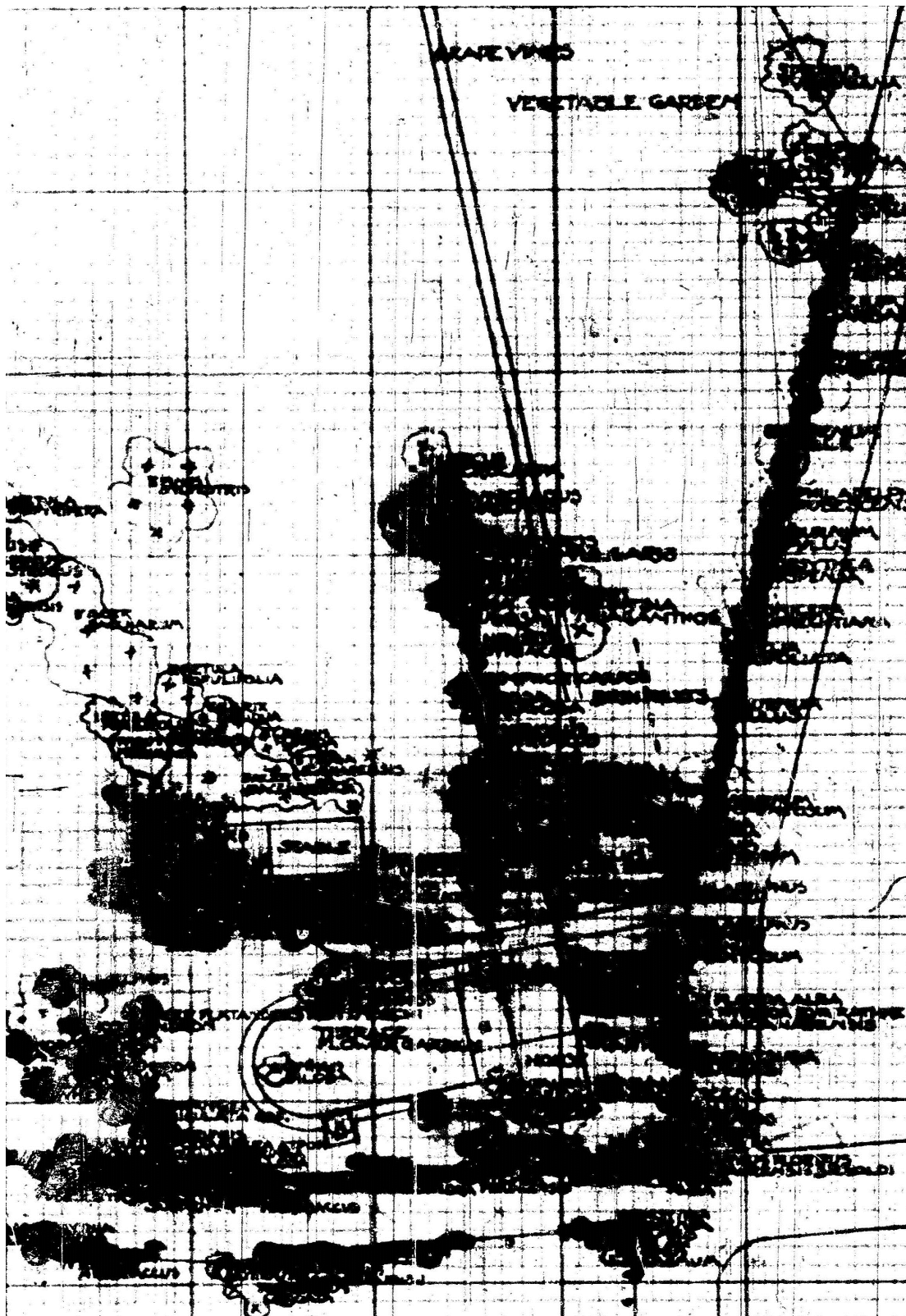


Figure 2.25b Detail of 1909 Griffin plan showing the core Homestead at the intersection of Stephen Mather Road and Brookside Road. Griffin's Sunken Garden is shown to the west of the house. A stable appears to the northwest. Directly north is a vegetable garden and grape arbor. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.26 Circa 1912 photograph capturing the west façade of the house, viewed from the road. A low hedge and other plantings on a west axis with the house are likely part of Walter Burley Griffin's Sunken Garden design. Vining plants climb the picket fence in the foreground. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.27 1912 photograph of Jane F. Mather and Bertha Mather (child), with another woman and young boy, in the Sunken Garden designed by Walter Burley Griffin. Square and rectangular beds occupy the center of the garden. Courtesy MHF.

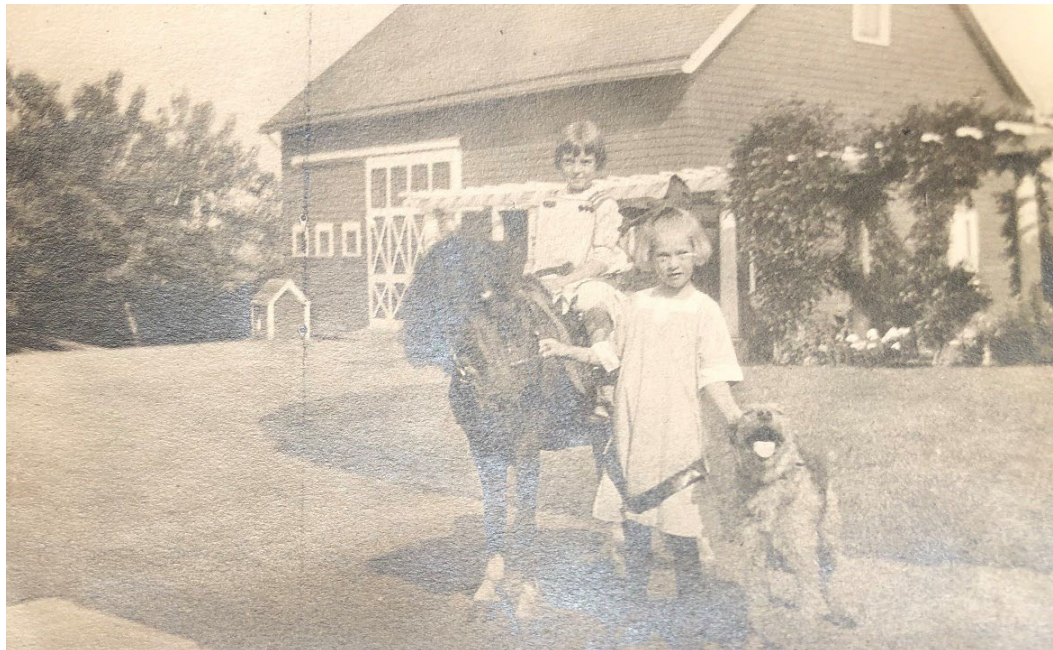


Figure 2.28 Circa 1910-15 photograph of Bertha Mather (right) standing in the Homestead driveway with a dog and another young girl sitting on Bertha's pony. The barn and the wisteria pergola appear in the background. A small structure in front of the barn is likely a dog house. An area of mown turf lawn is present beside the driveway. Courtesy McPherson-Nickerson family.

In 1915, Stephen Mather made further changes to the Homestead. He altered the south façade entry, reverting from the newly added wide porch back to a pedimented portico. A one-story porch was added on the west side of the house. A circa 1915 photograph of the south façade captures the new entry portico with the west porch seen in the background (Figure 2.29). A wooden fence, possibly in a dark paint color or unpainted, lines the property along Stephen Mather Road. A mature deciduous tree is present on the west side of the path, casting shade over the house and yard. Another structure, shorter than the house, appears in the background. Another ca. 1915 photograph from the Sunken Garden shows the newly constructed screened porch extending west from the Main House (Figure 2.30). A third ca. 1915 offers a closer view of the caretaker's cottage to the north; young Bertha Mather and other family members are pictured driving a horse-drawn carriage on the driveway between the cottage and the Main House (Figure 2.31).

Stephen Mather continued to expand upon his inherited property in 1916, purchasing approximately 71 acres from his cousin, David N. Mather, who had purchased tracts of adjacent land from the Reed and Hoyt families beginning in 1890.⁵⁴ These tracts of land are labeled as A₁, A₂, A₃, and B on a sketch drawn by Bertha Mather McPherson (Figure 2.32). Tract C on the sketch constitutes the Homestead and its immediate surrounds, which Stephen acquired in 1906.

In 1920, Major William A. Welch, then Chief Engineer of the Palisades Interstate Parkway Commission, designed a dam to create what is now Mathers Pond. The dam was constructed by local labor in 1921, under the supervision of Welch, and the pond was used for recreation.⁵⁵

Stephen Mather's most extensive alterations to the Main House were completed in 1927, in collaboration with architect Thomas Harlan Ellett. A circa 1927 topographic sketch of the property shows

the Homestead prior to these additions (**Figure 2.33**). The square historic footprint of the Main House is shown with the 1915 addition of the west porch. North of the Main House is the caretaker's cottage; the two buildings are connected by parallel trellises and a narrow path. The path and trellis are interrupted by the driveway, which enters from Brookside Road and terminates in a wide parking area at the south façade of the barn. A pergola extends west from the caretaker's cottage toward the circa 1906 barn, running approximately parallel to the driveway. Four unlabeled outbuildings are shown northwest of the barn, with an interior yard enclosed by a post-and-board fence. A secondary driveway enters from Grandview Avenue (now Stephen Mather Road) and loops around the north side of the outbuildings. North-northwest of the barn is a greenhouse and hot bed; a hedge divides these agricultural and horticultural buildings from the lawn around the caretaker's cottage. Northwest of the caretaker's cottage is a circular flower bed. A picket fence lines the property along Brookside Road and Grandview Avenue. As the fence line approaches the driveway on Grandview Avenue, it gives way to a stone wall.

In Stephen Mather and T.H. Ellet's 1927 alterations, a two-story wing was added to the north side of the house, greatly expanding the overall building footprint. The addition of this north wing replaced the latticework trellis which had previously extended over the driveway to the caretaker's cottage. Other changes included a remodeled west porch and the replacement of the historic wooden wellhouse with a stone-and-iron wellhead, shown in a ca. 1927 photograph taken from the Sunken Garden (**Figure 2.34**). Another ca. 1927 image of the garden shows Jane Mather, Bertha Mather, and two other women in the garden; Stephen Mather's barn and a Ford Model-T appear in the background (**Figure 2.35**).



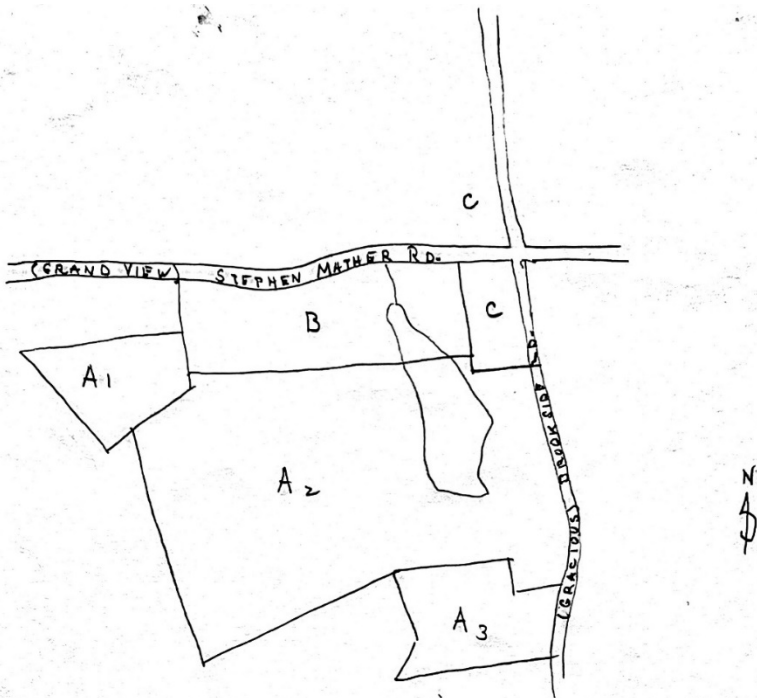
Figure 2.29 A circa 1915 photograph captures the landscape setting of tilled turf, deciduous trees and gravel drive as well as recent alterations to the house with a redesigned front entry portico and a one-story porch on the west side of the house. Note the cobble stone lined road edge. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.30 Circa 1915 photograph of the west side of the house shows the newly constructed one-story screened porch and the as-constructed Walter Burley Griffin garden with geometric beds. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.31 Undated ca. 1915 photograph of Bertha Mather (center) and several others in a horse-drawn carriage. The smaller house is pictured in the background, and the gravel entry drive exits onto Brookside Road through two white lattice trellises. A globe post light is present on the right side of the path. Courtesy MHF.



$$A = A_1 + A_2 + A_3$$

Figure 2.32 Undated sketch drawn by Bertha Mather McPherson depicts the parcels constituting the 1916 property components. Tracts A₁, A₂, A₃, and B were purchased by David N. Mather between 1890 and 1902, and subsequently purchased by Stephen Tyng Mather in 1916. Courtesy MHF.

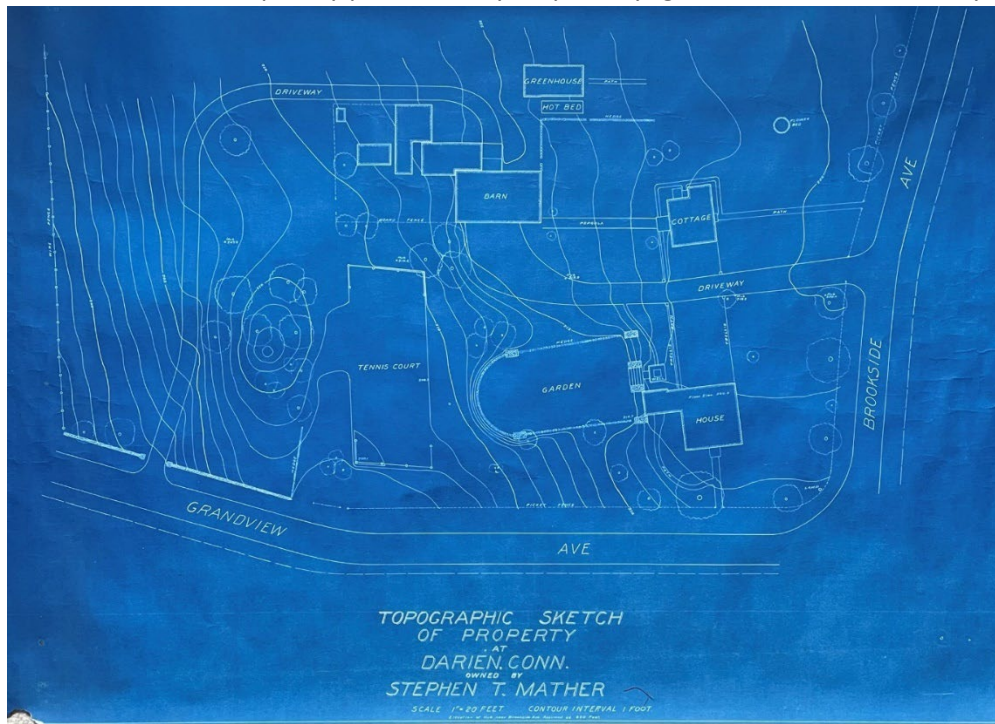


Figure 2.33 Undated, circa 1927 *Topographic Sketch of Property at Darien, Conn. Owned by Stephen T. Mather*. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.34 This ca. 1927-35 photograph of the house captures the new stone-and-iron wellhead, having replaced the 18th-century wooden wellhouse. The 1927 alterations completed by Stephen Tying Mather and architect Thomas Harlan Ellett are shown, including a two-story addition (left) and a redesigned side porch. A bed of small evergreen trees and shrubs lines the gravel driveway. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.35 This 1927 photograph captures Jane F. Mather (left), Bertha Mather (right), and two other women in the Sunken Garden. The geometric beds are clearly defined by gravel paths running between them. The flat-topped hedge around the garden is relatively low, allowing clear views to the barn and a Ford Model T appear in the background. Courtesy MHF.

Daily life at the Mather Homestead in the 1920s had evolved drastically from the self-sufficient farming lifestyle of the Homestead's earliest inhabitants. The 1927 floor plans for the Main House include the addition of two bedrooms for live-in maids, as well as a maids' sitting room on the first floor. Far from the days of eking out a living on the farm, this generation of the Mather family had the ability to hire others for the daily tasks of running a household.

Stephen Mather's health began to decline in 1927. He continued to work until suffering a stroke in 1928. He retired from his position as director of the National Park Service in January 1929, and returned home to the Mather Homestead where he lived until his health further deteriorated.

In 1929, Stephen Mather oversees the construction of a new barn further west.⁵⁶ The construction of this barn is captured in a circa 1929 Mather family video, which shows both Stephen and Bertha Mather on site during the process. The new barn had an attached three-car garage (**Figure 2.36**).

A photograph from 1929 captures Stephen T. Mather and Jane F. Mather seated on the south entry portico steps (**Figure 2.37**). Two other 1929 photographs show the Sunken Garden, the Main House, and some borrowed views of the adjacent landscape in the final year of Stephen Mather's life (**Figures 2.38 and 2.39**). Stephen Tyng Mather died in 1930, leaving the Homestead and 98 acres of land to his daughter, Bertha Mather.



Figure 2.36 Barn built by Stephen Tyng Mather, circa 1929. Two existing deciduous trees appear in front of the south façade of the three-car attached garage. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.37 1929 photograph of Stephen Tying Mather and Jane Thacker Floy seated in front of the Mather Homestead. Evergreen shrubs of various sizes are planted along the foundation. A mosaic flagstone path leads from the gate and up two steps to the front door, surmounted by the 1916 redesigned portico. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.38 Circa 1929 photograph of the Walter Burley Griffin Sunken Garden, facing east toward the house. The two-story wing, added in 1927, blocks the view between the garden and Brookside Road. Courtesy MHF.

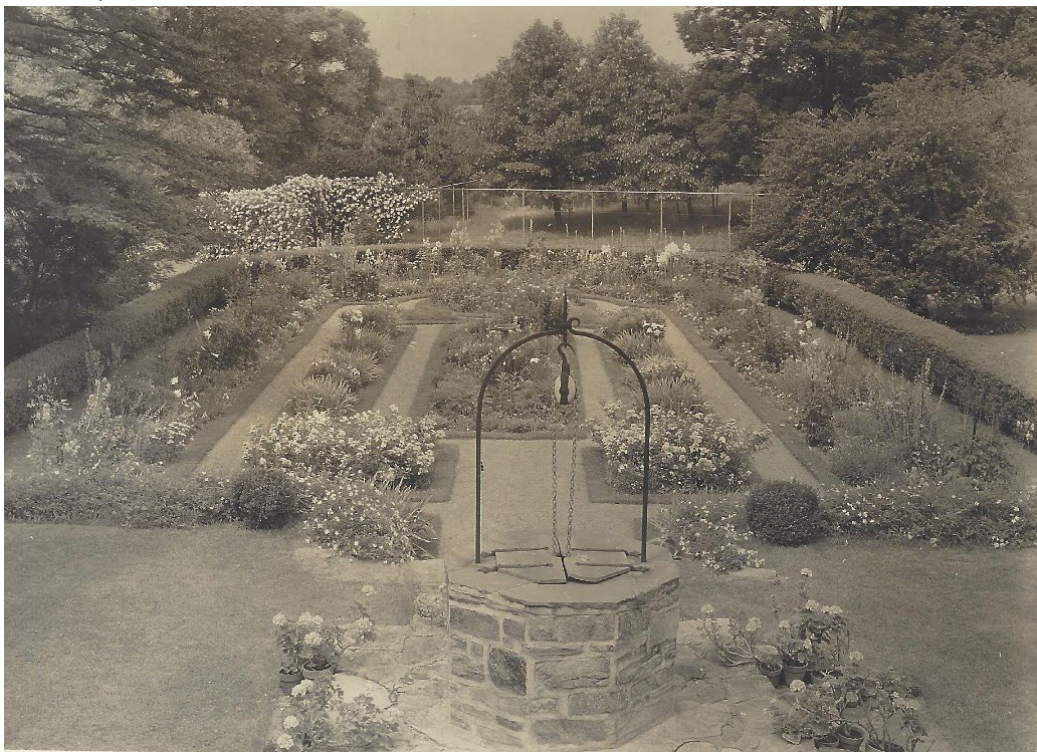


Figure 2.39 Circa 1929 photograph of the Sunken Garden, facing west. The stone and iron wellhead aligns on the central axis of the garden. A low, flat-topped hedge encloses the concentric geometric beds of the garden. A white fence encloses the tennis court in the background. Courtesy MHF.

E. Bertha Mather McPherson and Family Ownership, 1930 to 2017

- 1930** Bertha Mather McPherson inherits the Mather Homestead from her father. She and her husband, Edward R. McPherson, raise their three children at the Homestead, where Bertha lives until her death in 1993.
- 1936** Bertha adds a second story over the porch on the west side of the house.
- 1938** Landscape architect Lilian Egleston redesigns the Sunken Garden for Bertha Mather McPherson.
- 1962** Charles Middleeer designs a brick terrace around the well, enclosed by the main block of the house, west porch, and north wing. Oral history indicates that the terrace was built in 1964.
- 1963** The Mather Homestead is designated as a National Historic Landmark.
- 1963-** Bertha Mather McPherson builds a guest house, called the ‘Little House,’ on the foundation of
1965 the former caretaker’s cottage and adds an attached two-car garage.
- 1966** The Homestead is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.⁵⁷
- 1967** Historic American Buildings Survey documentation of Mather Homestead house and property.
- 1969** The McPhersons carry out exterior alterations to the Main House.
- 1993** Bertha Mather McPherson dies at the age of 86. Her husband, Edward McPherson, lives in the house until his death in 2002.

Upon his death in 1930, Stephen Tyng Mather bequeathed the Mather Homestead, a property then comprising roughly 98 acres, to his only daughter, Bertha Floy Mather. Born in Chicago, Bertha Mather attended Vassar College and went on to earn a master’s degree in 1933 from the Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture.⁵⁸ She was one of the first female architects in Connecticut. Bertha Mather was also long associated with the Student Conservation Association, a non-profit that engages young people in conservation and environmental stewardship. She shared her father’s passion for nature and accompanied him on trips to national parks (**Figure 2.40**). In 1953, Bertha Mather founded the Darien Historical Society and served as its first president.

Bertha became increasingly involved in the development of the Homestead, especially during the 1926 renovations of the Main House by architect Thomas Harlan Ellett. During Stephen Mather’s excursions to western national parks, Bertha corresponded with the architect and contributed her own design ideas. In 1931, she designed and built a house for her aunt, Grace Floy, directly opposite the Mather Homestead on the corner of Brookside Road (**Figure 2.41**).

An aerial photograph from 1934 captures the Mather Homestead landscape four years after Bertha Mather took ownership of the property (**Figure 2.42**). Structures on the property include the Main House, caretaker’s cottage, greenhouse, and barn. A patchwork of fields that extends north of the core property indicates ongoing productive land use. To the east along Stephen Mather Road, the house designed by Bertha Mather for Grace Floy is present. The McPherson family’s activities extended beyond the core Homestead property. Bertha was known to ride horses in the parcel to the southeast; a worn path around the perimeter of this parcel can be seen in the 1934 aerial photograph. Mathers Pond, south of Stephen Mather Road, was used by the children for swimming and ice skating.⁵⁹



Figure 2.40 Bertha Mather (center) and Stephen Tyng Mather (left) at Yosemite National Park circa 1920s. Courtesy NPS NPGallery.⁶⁰

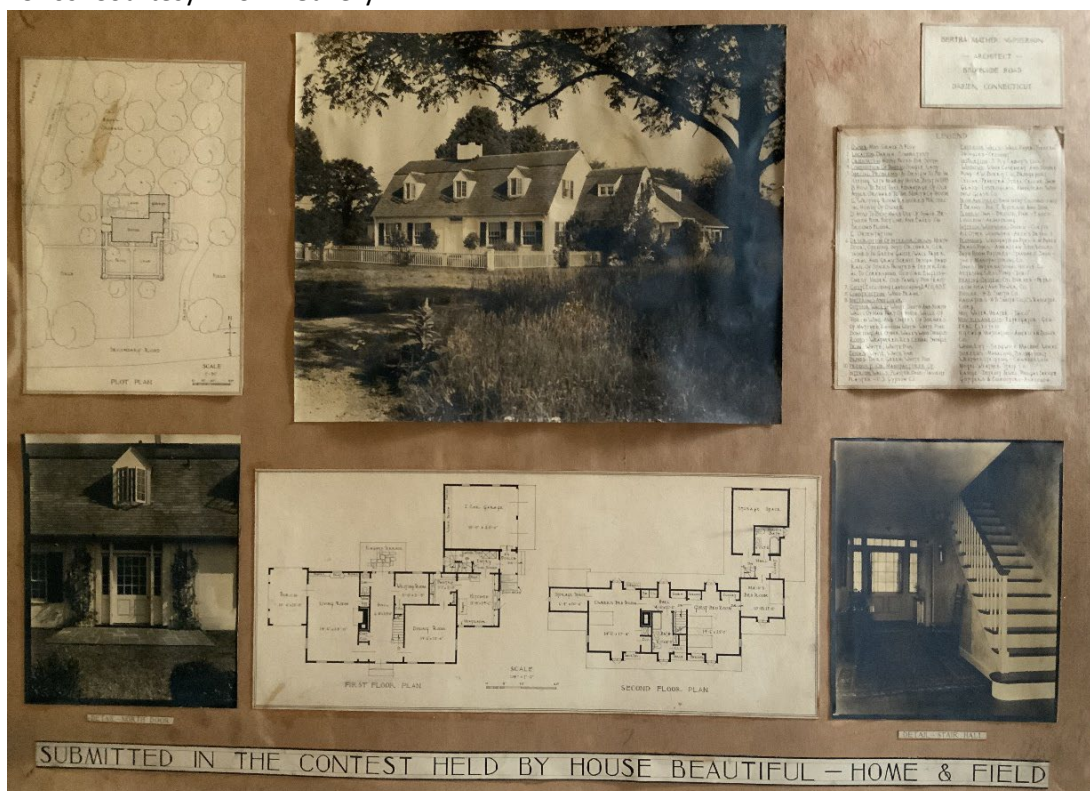


Figure 2.41 Ca. 1931 pin-up display of Bertha Mather's as-built design of a house on the corner of Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads, east of the Mather Homestead. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.42a A detail of the 1934 aerial shows the Mather Homestead and adjacent properties. The outline shows the Homestead property according to the 1901 survey of Joseph W. Mather's property. Courtesy CT State Library.

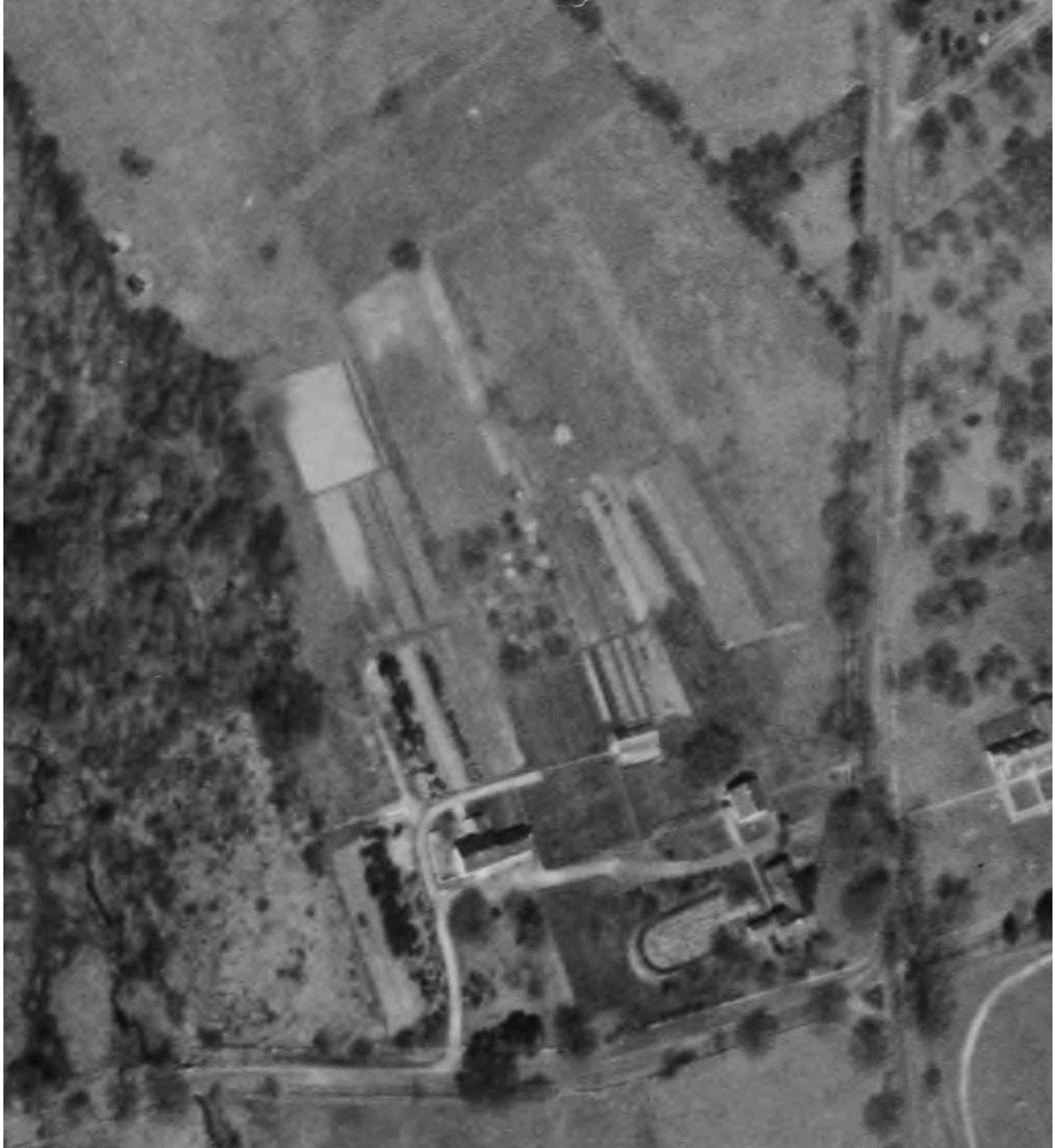


Figure 2.42b A close detail of the 1934 Mather Homestead depicts a productive landscape of cultivated row crops, hay fields, and potentially orchard trees extending north of the greenhouse and barn. Courtesy CT State Library.

In 1936, Bertha Mather added a second story over the west porch on the Main House, which further contributed to the secluded feeling of the Sunken Garden as being enclosed from Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads.⁶¹ In 1938, Bertha commissioned landscape architect Lilian Egleston to redesign the Sunken Garden (**Figure 2.43**). Egleston's construction plan shows a grass panel in place of the former design of concentric beds and walks seen in earlier photographs (**Figure 2.38**). Proposed plantings shown in border beds include flowering perennials like Japanese iris, bearded iris, daylilies, and foxglove, and annuals like petunias and poppies (**Figure 2.43**). Bertha made her own interventions in the broader landscape as well, planting various flowering trees on the property, including lilac, Kousa and pink dogwood trees, and climbing wisteria on a pergola that extended west from the caretaker's cottage. The greenhouse was primarily used to grow flowers such as blue and yellow pansies, camellias, and snapdragons.⁶²

Productive use of the Mather Homestead landscape continued into the 1940s. Anne Tracy, the oldest of Bertha McPherson's children, recalls the Homestead property as a farm having a horse, a cow, and a vegetable garden.⁶³ The primary vegetable garden was located north of the caretaker's cottage and extended north in a rectilinear bed. Apple orchards were also present north of the Main House.⁶⁴ A circa 1944-45 photograph shows Stephen Mather McPherson, son of Bertha and Edward McPherson, on a horse pulling a plow (**Figure 2.44**). A 1946 Sanborn fire insurance map shows the Main House, caretaker's cottage, greenhouse, and barn (**Figure 2.45**). An oblique 1954 aerial photograph captures landscape around these buildings and structures. Small trees are present north of the greenhouse. On the left side of the photograph, two linear stands of pines are present, one alongside the driveway and the other extending north of the barn (**Figure 2.46**). The greenhouse was razed in 1965, though the potting shed remained.⁶⁵

A 1951 aerial photograph captures residential properties around the west side of Mathers Pond (**Figure 2.47**). By 1951, Bertha and Edward McPherson had previously established Dorchester Road and sold several plots of land around the periphery of the Pond.⁶⁶ Pilgrim Road was not yet established by this time and does not appear in the aerial photograph.

While vegetable gardens and livestock were present at the Homestead in the 1940s, overall land use had shifted away from self-sufficient homesteading and toward leisure or recreational activities. In the late 1930s or early 1940s, a children's playhouse structure was moved from an unknown location to the lawn east of the greenhouse. Jane Nickerson, the McPherson's youngest daughter, had her own small flower bed located southeast of the playhouse.⁶⁷ The grass-surfaced tennis court was not used regularly.⁶⁸

A series of photographs from 1951-56 capture Lilian Egleston's redesigned Sunken Garden as built, as well as some of Bertha Mather's alterations to the landscape. A 1951 photograph of Bertha seated in a lawn chair between the Sunken Garden and the Main House captures the wisteria pergola extending west from the guest house, a feature retained from Stephen Mather's era (**Figures 2.48 and 2.21**). A photograph from 1953 reveals more of the landscape north of the garden, with a mown lawn panel southwest of the children's playhouse. A linear bed of tulips bordered the west edge of the lawn north of the barn (**Figure 2.49**). A second 1953 photograph of the playhouse shows the difference between the maintained lawn in the play area and the rougher turf closer to the greenhouse; the latter structure is captured in a 1956 photograph (**Figure 2.50 and 2.51**). The Sunken Garden appears in another 1953 photograph with a central lawn panel and perimeter beds (**Figure 2.52**). The area between the Sunken Garden and Main House was surfaced with grass (**Figure 2.53**).

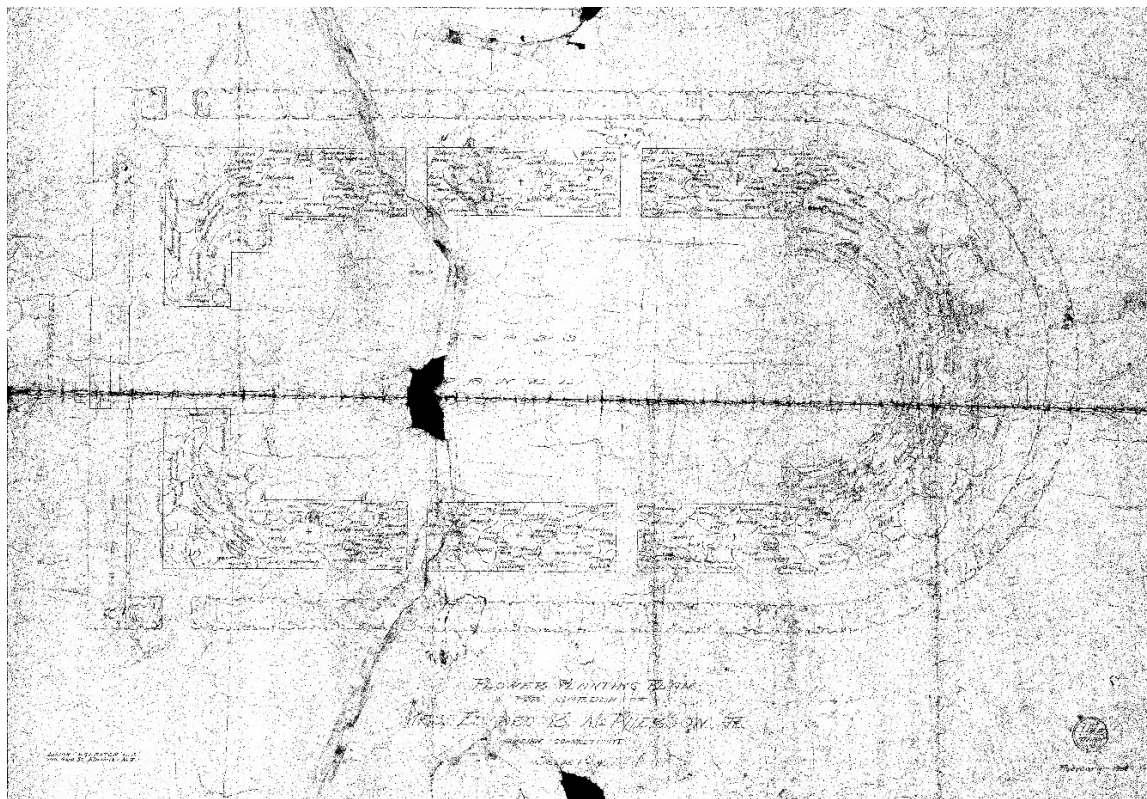


Figure 2.43a 1938 Lillian Egleston Flower Planting Plan for the Sunken Garden. Courtesy MHF.

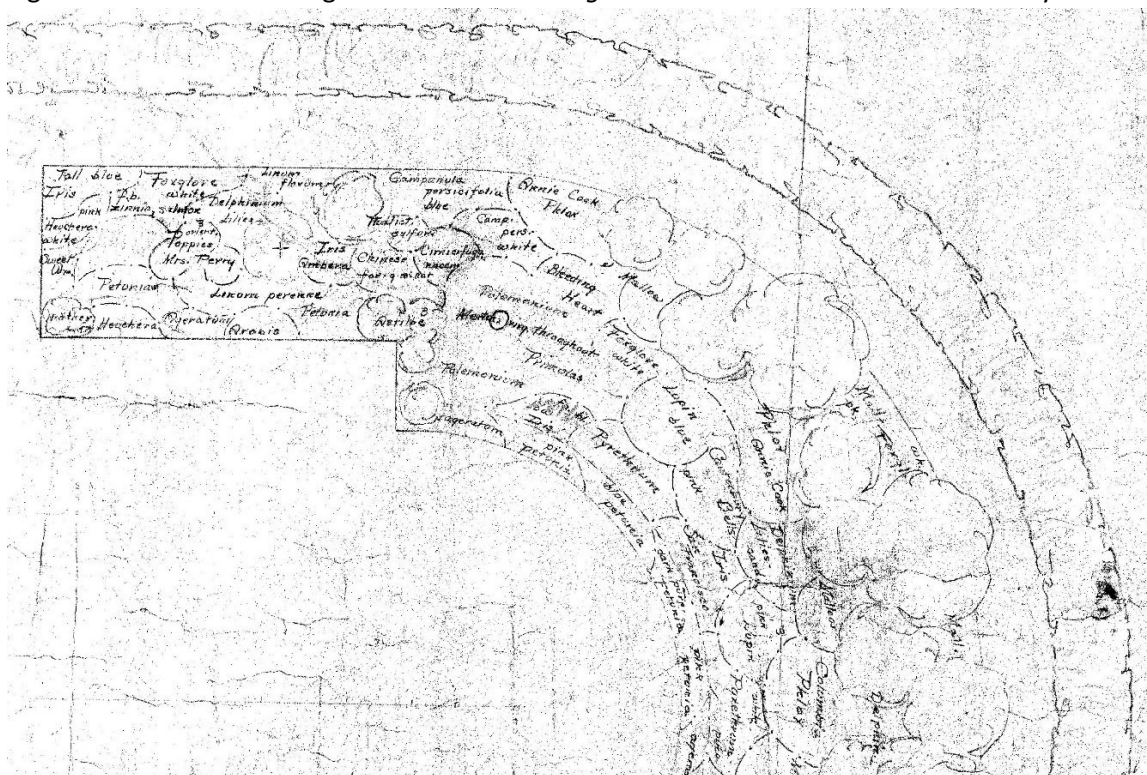


Figure 2.43b Detail of 1938 Egleston Flower Planting Plan. In the curved planting bed around the west perimeter, Egleston proposes bearded iris, daylilies, and foxglove, and annuals like petunias and poppies. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.44 Circa 1944-45 photograph of Stephen Mather McPherson, son of Bertha and Edward McPherson, on a horse pulling a plow. A man, likely the caretaker, Mr. J. Darwin Bourger, steers the plow from behind.⁶⁹ A stone wall lines the turf lawn in the background. Courtesy McPherson-Nickerson family.



Figure 2.45 Detail of a 1946 Sanborn fire insurance map of Darien. The Mather Homestead property is located toward the upper left corner of the image, near the boundaries of New Canaan and Norwalk. The map shows the Main House, the caretaker's cottage to the north, the greenhouse, and a larger building to the northwest which is presumably the barn. Courtesy LOC.



Figure 2.46 1954 oblique aerial photograph of the Mather Homestead in context. Mathers Pond is seen to the southwest, at the bottom of the image. Stephen Mather Road extends east from the left side of the image, and Brookside Road extends north from the right side. The Homestead is situated on the north side of Stephen Mather Road. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.47 1951 aerial captures residential development around the west and south periphery of Mathers Pond. Courtesy UConn.



Figure 2.48 1951 photograph of the north view from the area between the Mather house and the Sunken Garden. A flagstone path leads to the gravel driveway. On the opposite side of the driveway, a pergola supports climbing wisteria. At the east end of the pergola is a wooden fence; a glimpse of the caretaker's cottage is visible. North of the pergola is a greenhouse and gable-roofed potting shed, flanked by a low hedge. A large canopy tree stands between the cottage and the greenhouse. Bertha Mather McPherson is seated in a lawn chair; a pile of branches likely indicates recent lawn seeding where a tree was removed. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.49 1953 photograph captures the northwest view from a window in the Main House, looking over the Sunken Garden. North of the driveway, an area of closely mown turf is bisected by a gravel path. This lawn may be associated with the playhouse, partially obscured by the pink flowering tree. At one point, a linear planting of tulips lined the lawn west edge adjacent to a row of evergreen trees. Birch tree branches near the Main House are visible on the right side of the image. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.50 1953 photograph of the playhouse structure, located north of the barn. The playhouse was moved to this location in the late 1930s or early 1940s. Two flowering trees stand against the playhouse on either side. To the left, a strip of mown grass stretched north. An area of low shrubs is present to the right. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.51 1956 photograph of Helen Remer (right), a friend of Bertha Mather McPherson, and another unidentified woman standing by the greenhouse and attached potting shed. A flat-topped hedge lines the south side of the structure. In the distance, yellow blooms are visible over the hedge (right). Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.52 1953 photograph of the Sunken Garden with Lilian Egleston's design in place. The ground plane around the historic well is mown grass. A panel of mown grass occupies the center of the Sunken Garden, lined with planted beds of flowering perennials around the perimeter and enclosed by a low hedge. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.53 1960 photograph of the Main House, viewed from the Sunken Garden. The area between the garden and the house is surfaced with grass. Two white wicker chairs and a table are present beside the ivy-covered wellhead. Vines climb the house façade. A silver birch hangs over the north (left) side of the stone steps. In the foreground, one of the Sunken Garden beds is planted with iris. Courtesy MHF.

In 1962, landscape architect Charles Middleleer designed an adjoining brick-paved terrace for the space between the Main House and Sunken Garden (**Figure 2.54**). In Middleleer's plan, the proposed orthogonal terrace is lined with shrubs like mountain laurel, azaleas, *Enkianthus*, and Japanese pieris (*Pieris japonica*). These plantings are placed around existing shrubs, including holly (*Ilex spp.*), yew (*Taxus spp.*) and Burkwood viburnum. Proposed groundcovers include pachysandra and euonymus, in addition to existing English ivy. In a square bed at the approximate center of the terrace, Middleleer proposes a honey locust tree (*Gleditsia triacanthos*). An existing birch tree and flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) frame the eight steps descending to the Sunken Garden. The historic well is aligned with the center of the steps.

Middleleer's plan also includes proposed plantings in foundation beds against the south and east façades of the Main House (**Figure 2.54**). At the south façade, two holly shrubs are proposed to frame the front entry. Symmetrical beds of pachysandra are lined with a border of dwarf Japanese holly (*Ilex crenata* 'Stokes'), and two mountain laurel shrubs frame the south façade. Near the picket fence and south entry gate, Middleleer's plan shows a tree stump in the approximate location of the large deciduous tree captured in historic photographs (**Figure 2.29**). A curvilinear path of rounded stepping stones leads west from the entry path, wrapping around the house and through the porch to the brick terrace. Along the east façade, Middleleer shows a linear foundation bed of pachysandra leading north to a semicircular area surfaced with pebbles and trap rock. Within this area, Middleleer proposes a Sunken Garden adjacent to the below-grade side entry into the Main House.

In circa 1963-65, Bertha Mather built a guest house, called the 'Little House,' on the foundation of the former caretaker's cottage. She also added an attached two-car garage. According to Jane Nickerson, Bertha's daughter, the guest house was occupied by various family members whose stays varied in duration from short-term to long-term.⁷⁰

A 1965 aerial photograph of the Homestead captures the diminishment of cultivated land in the north portion of the property. Of the formerly broad geometry of linear beds and orchards, only two quadrants remain: one directly north of the playhouse, and another directly north of the guest house (**Figure 2.55**). Photographs of the Mather Homestead from the late 1960s and 1970s show the Middleleer brick terrace as built, as well as other alterations to the house surrounds and broader landscape. A 1963 photograph shows the slate walk from the driveway to the terrace; a lamppost stands on the left side of the path. Within the terrace, a young tree is present, presumably the honey locust proposed in Middleleer's plans (**Figure 2.56**). Two photographs from 1969 show the completed brickwork, border plantings, and the maturing honey locust (**Figures 2.57 and 2.58**).

By 1967, about fifty acres remained part of the Homestead property.⁷¹ Carried out in 1967, documentation of the Stephen Tyng Mather House for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) includes a descriptive site narrative. This description situates the Homestead in the context of "an open area of widely separated country residences and farmland." The white wood picket fence along the frontages extended about 200 feet along Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads. In 1967, as seen in the 1927 topographic sketch, this fence line was continued by stone walls (**Figure 2.33**). The walk from the front gate on Stephen Mather Road to the south entrance and west porch was paved with rough flagstone, while the walk from the Main House to the guest house was bluestone. The gravel driveway from Brookside Road ran between the Main House and guest house, passing south of the barn and exiting onto Stephen Mather Road. The ground plane between the Main House and the picket fence was

informally planted with lawn, mature deciduous trees, low shrubs, and groundcover near the foundation. The periphery of Middleleer's brick terrace was planted with shrubs.⁷²

Photographs from the 1970s indicate the developing status of the Mather Homestead as a historic site, in addition to being the Mather McPherson family home, following its 1967 nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Various photographs taken by the National Park Service document the Main House, guest house, and other structures on the property (**Figures 2.59 to 2.61**). Images from the 1978 bicentennial celebration of the Mather Homestead capture people in colonial costume reenacting the Revolutionary War years (**Figures 2.62 and 2.63**). Another photograph from the bicentennial shows the landscape along the south façade of the Main House at the time (**Figure 2.64**). Two circa 1980 and 1982 photographs show the barn, built by Stephen Mather, and the playhouse (**Figures 2.65 and 2.66**).

A 1990 aerial photograph captures the condition of the Mather Homestead landscape during the final years of Bertha Mather McPherson's life (**Figure 2.67**). The greenhouse and potting shed are no longer present, although the playhouse remains. Formerly productive areas north of the barn and the Little House (once the location of the caretaker's cottage) no longer retain evidence of cultivation. By 2004, two years after Edward McPherson's death, an aerial photograph shows the development of a private driveway across what was formerly the northern portion of the Mather Homestead property (**Figure 2.68**). That 2004 aerial view shows the initial incursion of a private drive into the Homestead fields. A subsequent 2013 aerial shows two completed private residences north of the Homestead, with a third house under construction (**Figure 2.69**). A 2015 aerial image records the property and its surrounding context at that date (**Figure 2.70**).

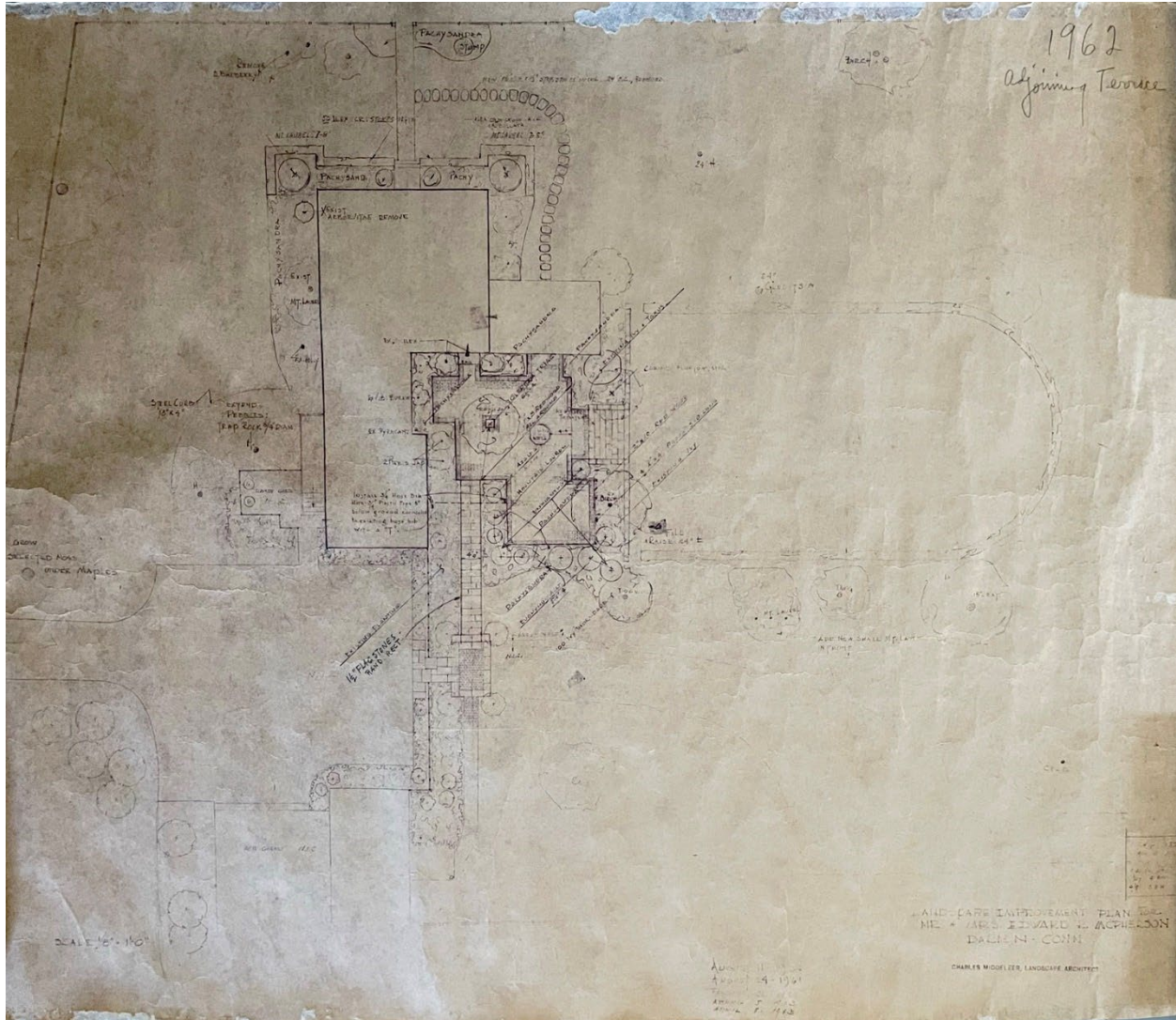


Figure 2.54a 1962 Charles Middleleer *Landscape Improvement Plan for Mr. & Mrs. Edward McPherson, Adjoining Terrace*. Courtesy MHF.

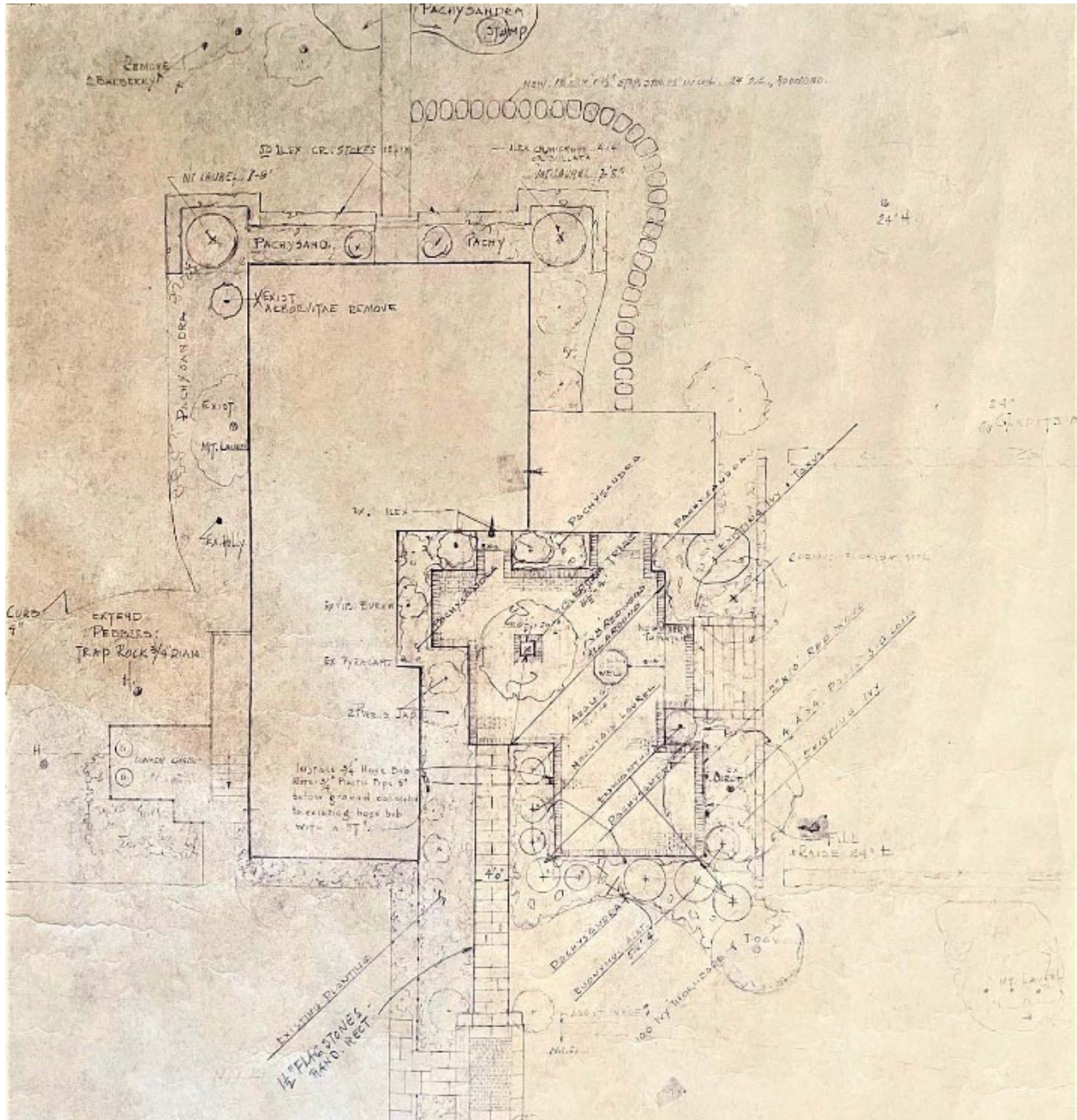


Figure 2.54b Detail of Middleleer's 1962 *Landscape Improvement Plan*. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.55a Detail of 1965 aerial showing the approximate Mather Homestead National Historic Landmark Boundary, as designated in the 1963 nomination form.⁷³ This leaf-off view clearly captures the linear plantings of evergreen trees along the west boundary of the core Homestead, as well as smaller evergreens near the Main House. Courtesy CT State Library.



Figure 2.55b A close detail of the 1965 Mather Homestead depicts a landscape with trees, lawns, garden and cultivated plots to the north. Courtesy CT State Library.



Figure 2.56 1963 NPS photograph of the Mather Homestead, taken from the northwest. A slate walk extends from the gravel drive toward the terrace. A young tree, presumably the honey locust proposed and planted by Middleleer, is present within the terrace. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.57 This 1969 photograph captures the brick terrace in place, as designed by Charles Middleleer in 1962. In the background, the guest house and wisteria pergola are visible. Small terracotta pots of pink geraniums are arranged around the well. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.58 Another 1969 photograph of the brick terrace viewed from the Sunken Garden. Bertha Mather McPherson is pictured holding a watering can. Behind the historic well, a young honey locust is present. Two pots of pink geraniums on the stone walls frame the steps to the terrace. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.59 1974 NPS photograph of the Little House, added by Bertha Mather McPherson and built on the foundation of the former caretaker's cottage, located north of the Main House. Shrubs and groundcover beds line the cottage foundation. A narrow path leads from the gravel driveway to the front entry. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.60 1974 NPS photograph of the barn and garage built in 1929, located northwest of the Main House. A dense wooded area of tall pines and deciduous trees is seen behind the barn. The foreground is surfaced with mown grass. A gravel drive approaches the barn from the right. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.61 1974 NPS photograph of the playhouse (left) and the potting shed (right) in the field north of the Mather house. The ground plane in the foreground is covered in rough turf. Nearer to the structures, the turf appears more consistently maintained. One tree stands on the right side of the playhouse, and a smaller flowering tree obscures the view of the potting shed. In the background, taller grasses are visible. The field is enclosed by a dense line of trees. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.62 This photograph from the bicentennial celebration in 1978 records a living history event. Family members participated in the event; this image shows Tina Sloan McPherson, Stephen Mather McPherson, and Anne McPherson Tracy.⁷⁴ A large honey locust tree is present in the center of the brick terrace. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.63 This 1978 photograph, taken at the Mather Homestead bicentennial celebration, shows mown lawn extending northwest of the Little House with tall meadow beyond. Foreground flowers appear to be dogwood. A stone edge lines the gravel driveway. Courtesy MHF.

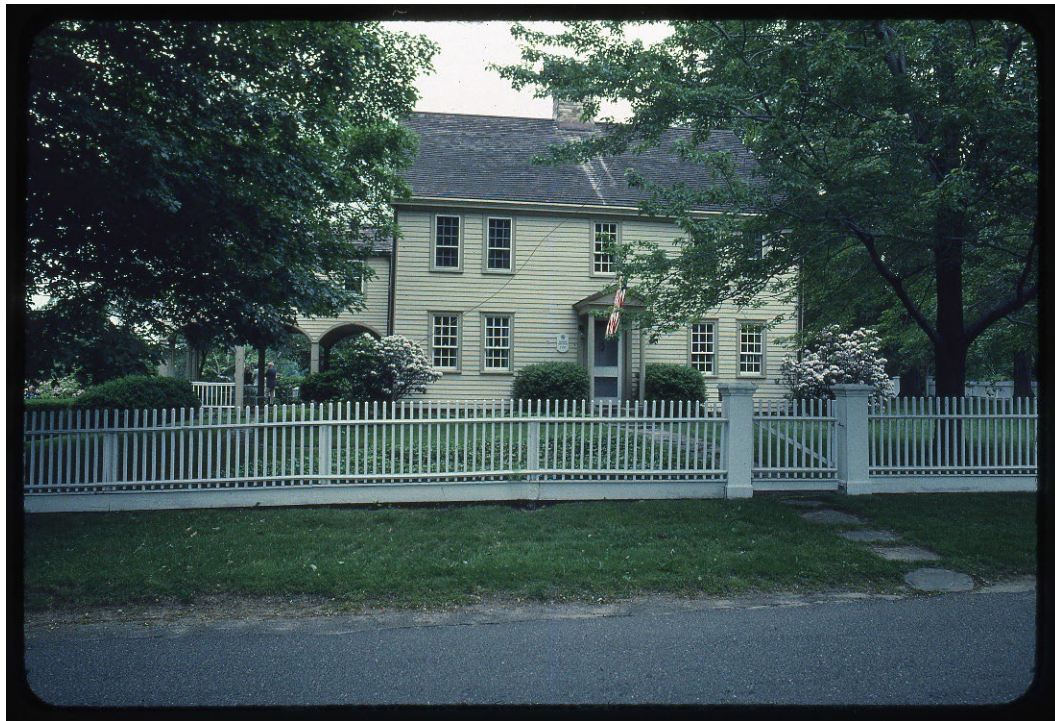


Figure 2.64 1978 photograph of the front entry to the house, viewed from Stephen Mather Road. Two large deciduous trees near the fence line asymmetrically frame the façade. Round evergreen shrubs flank the portico; this symmetry is enforced by flowering shrubs at either corner of the façade. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.65 1982 photograph of a snow-covered view along the entry drive from Stephen Mather Road, lined by deciduous trees on either side. The Stephen T. Mather barn appears on the right. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 2.66 Circa 1980 photograph of the open area north of the house, prior to the sale of this portion of the Homestead property. The ground plane is covered with dry turf grass. The playhouse structure appears to the left. A low shrub sits beside the playhouse. A single deciduous tree is present northeast of the playhouse. Courtesy McPherson-Nickerson family.



Figure 2.67a 1990 aerial detail shows dark woodlands to the west and a light tone on the large field. The lawn around the Main House, guest house, and barn is distinct in dark tone. Courtesy UCONN.



Figure 2.67b A closer, enhanced detail of the 1990 Mather Homestead. The greenhouse and potting shed, formerly located northwest of the guest house, are no longer present. Further north, the playhouse structure is retained. Courtesy UCONN.



Figure 2.68a Detail of 2004 aerial photograph captures the early development of a private driveway cutting east-west across the field north of the Main House. The sale of this north lot likely preceded this image. Courtesy UCONN.



Figure 2.68b Closer detail of 2004 aerial. Along the west property boundary, the stand of trees historically composed solely of evergreens now exhibits a mix of deciduous (leaf-off) and evergreen. Courtesy UCONN.



Figure 2.69 This 2013 aerial shows a uniform lawn north of the core area and the development of a third residential property beyond the open mown field. Courtesy Google Earth.



Figure 2.70 Similar to the 2013 image, this 2015 aerial showing the Mather Homestead as it appeared in its final two years of private family ownership, prior to its transfer to the Mather Homestead Foundation in 2017. Courtesy Google Earth.

F. Conclusion of Mather Homestead Landscape History & Evolution

This complex evolution of the Mather Homestead landscape has been shaped by multiple generations of the Mather family. Prior imprints by processes of geological formation, indigenous occupation of the area before the Mather family years are also important to this area. The Mather property bears the sequential imprint of land uses, family lifestyles, and design decisions by Deacon Joseph and Sarah Mather, his wife; Rana Mather, Phoebe Mather, and Betsy Lockwood; Joseph Wakeman Mather and Bertha Jemima Walker; Stephen Tying and Jane Floy Mather; and Bertha Mather and Edward McPherson. Cultivation and productive land use, in particular, shaped much of the Homestead property beyond the Main House.

Similarly, the Mather family was deeply influential in shaping the township of Darien, Connecticut, beginning with the Reverend Moses Mather's appointment as preacher of Middlesex Parish. In many ways, the transformation of the Mather Homestead, from a colonial settlement to the eventual summer home of upwardly mobile New Yorkers and San Franciscans, is reflective of the overall development of Darien from a small farming community to the smallest town on Connecticut's affluent Gold Coast.

To follow this detailed historical exploration and documentation, Chapter 3 addresses the recent history of the Mather Homestead, beginning with its transition from family ownership to the Mather Homestead Foundation in 2017. This is followed by an illustrated discussion of the Mather Homestead landscape character as it exists in 2023.

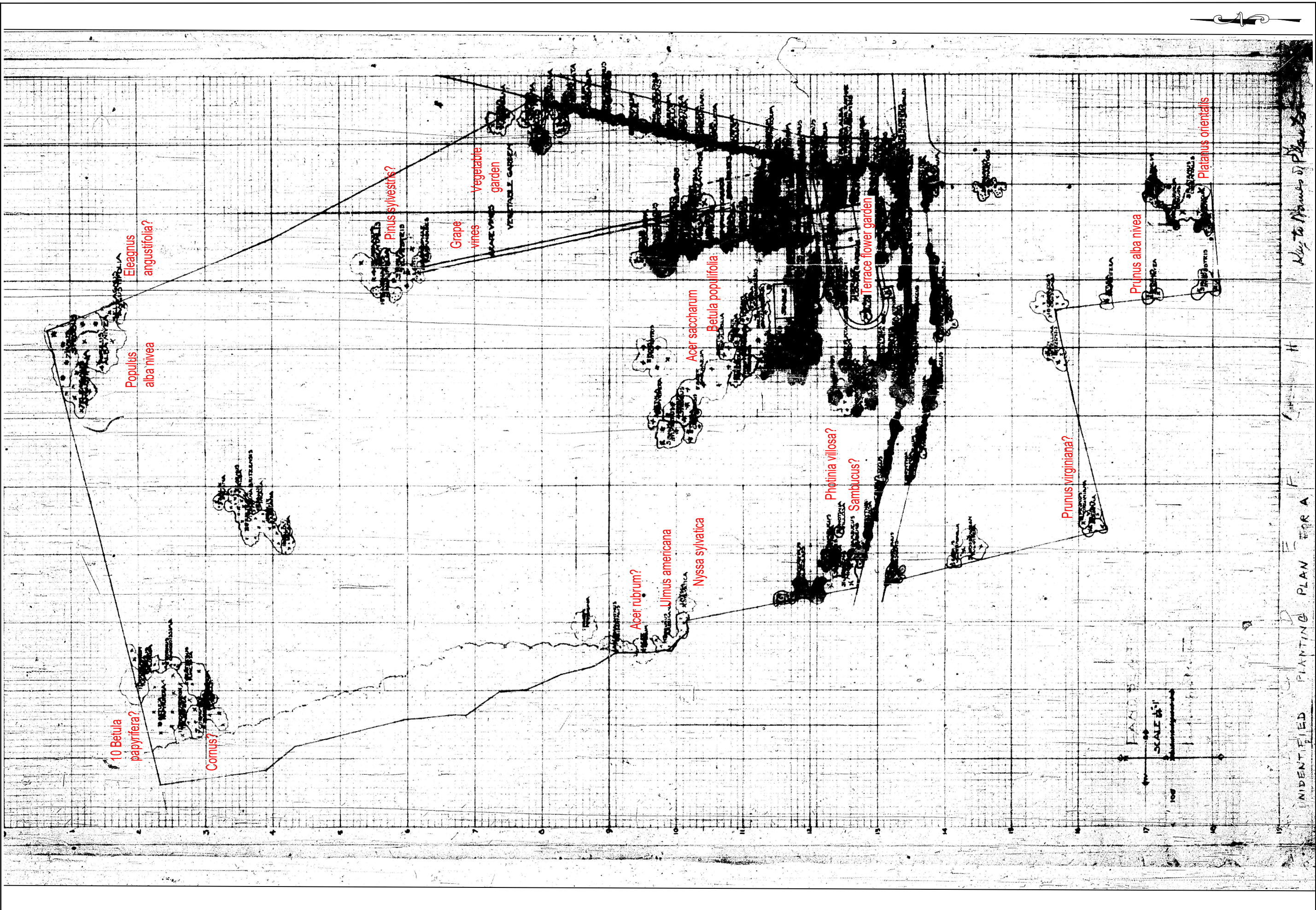
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MATHER HOMESTEAD CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

Darien, Connecticut

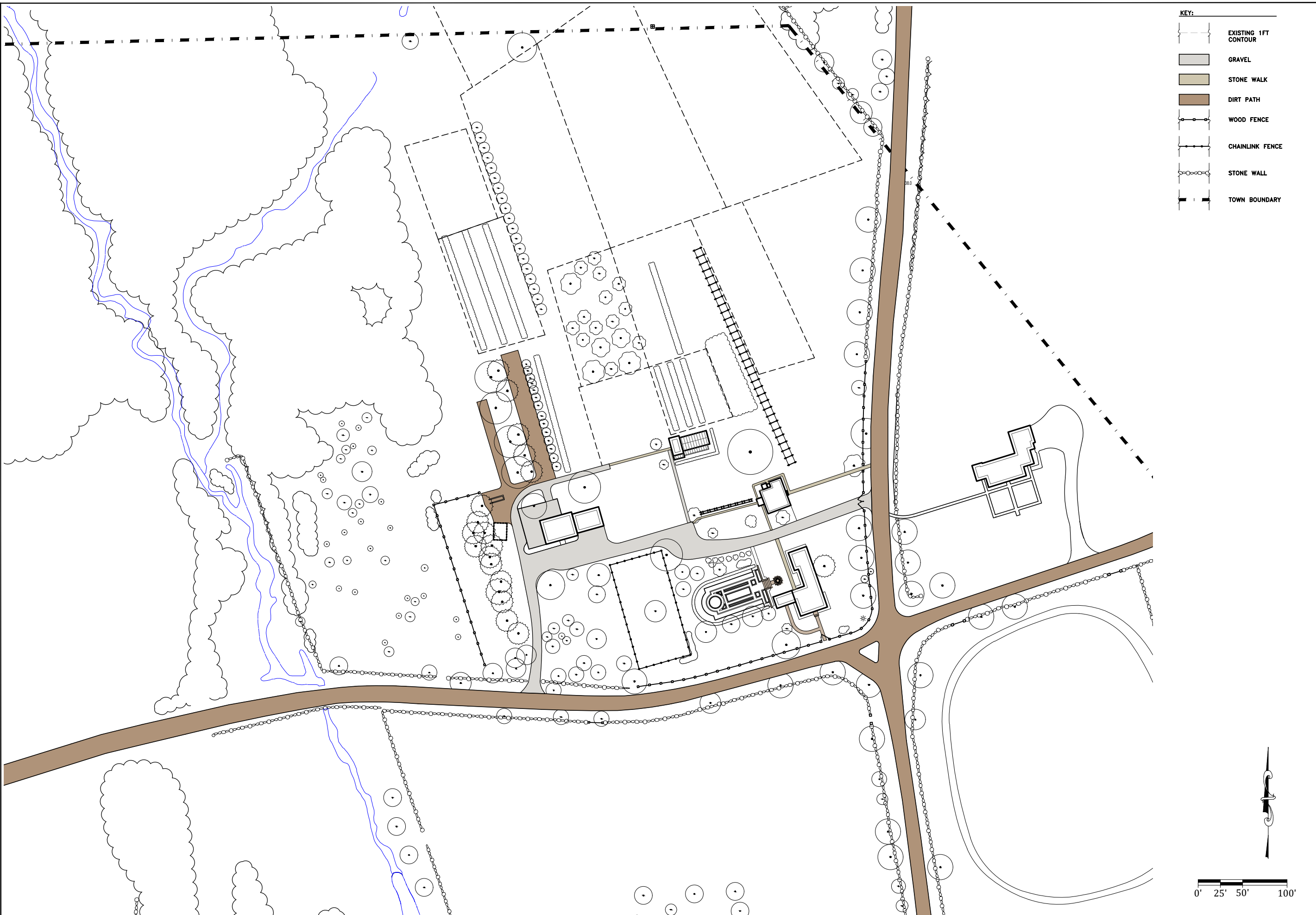
Client
Mather Homestead
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Drawing Title:
**L2 1909 Griffin
 Plan with Labels**

Date:
 January 2023



- KEY:**
- EXISTING 1FT CONTOUR
 - GRAVEL
 - STONE WALK
 - DIRT PATH
 - WOOD FENCE
 - CHAINLINK FENCE
 - STONE WALL
 - TOWN BOUNDARY



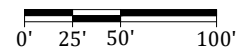
MATHER HOMESTEAD CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

Darien, Connecticut

Client
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Team
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Drawing Title:
**L4 1930 Period
Plan with
Circulation**

Date:
January 2024



MATHER HOMESTEAD CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

Darien, Connecticut

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






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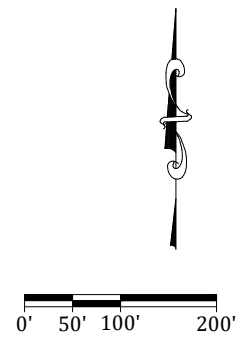
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Drawing Title:

L3 Annotated
1934 Aerial

Date:
January 2024

- KEY:
-  INDIVIDUAL TREE
 -  WOODLINE
 -  FIELDS
 -  VEGETATED BED
 -  STRUCTURE
 -  2024 PARCEL BOUNDARIES
 -  CIRCULATION
 -  WOOD FENCE
 -  STONE WALL



Sources: 1934 aerial photograph, courtesy CT State Library; 'Topographic Sketch of Property at Darien, Conn. Owned by Stephen T Mather,' unknown creator, circa pre-1927.



- KEY:**
- EXISTING 1FT CONTOUR
 - DECIDUOUS TREE
 - EVERGREEN TREE
 - ORNAMENTAL TREE
 - MEADOW
 - LAWN
 - VEGETATED BED
 - WOOD FENCE
 - STONE WALL
 - WETLAND BOUNDARY
 - TOWN BOUNDARY



MATHER HOMESTEAD CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

Darien, Connecticut

Client
Mather Homestead
 19 Stephen Mather Road, Darien Connecticut 06820

Team
Heritage Landscapes LLC
 Preservation Landscape Architects & Planners

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Drawing Title:
**L5 1930 Period
 Plan with
 Vegetation**

Date:
 January 2024

Mather Homestead ♦ Cultural Landscape Report

3 ♦ Mather Homestead Foundation Landscape Character, 2017 to 2024



A. Introduction to Mather Homestead Foundation Landscape Character

The Mather Homestead remained in the Mather family and descendants for multiple generations until 2017. The recent history of the landscape covers the years from 2017, when the Mather Homestead Foundation took on the stewardship of this historically important property and legacy of the Mather family, to the present. To understand and detail the landscape of today, this chapter is illustrated with recent aerial and ground photography. The existing landscape discussion employs landscape character areas (LCAs) and character-defining features (CDFs). These features include land use; spatial organization; visual organization; natural systems and topography; vegetation; circulation; buildings and structures; and small-scale features. Three plans capture the existing landscape as a graphic reference for this narrative.

- L6 2024 Landscape Plan with Circulation
- L7 2024 Landscape Plan with Vegetation
- L8 Existing boundaries & Rights-of-way

To capture the existing landscape in 2024, these plans depict the character-defining features with documentation drawn from prior plans and field reconnaissance by Heritage Landscapes.

B. Mather Homestead Foundation Recent Landscape History, 2017 to 2024

2017 The McPherson family donates the Mather Homestead Main House, buildings, and six acres of land to the newly formed Mather Homestead Foundation.

The first public events at the Mather Homestead are held in November 2017.

2018 Rehabilitation of Sunken Garden, including weeding and replanting, led by Mather Homestead Foundation board member Andy Huntington.

2020 The Mather Homestead Foundation, with support from the Darien Historical Society, completes the Elizabeth W. Chilton Education Center, also called 'the Barn.' The new building resembles an 18th-century dairy barn on the exterior, constructed in place of the deteriorating historic barn, with a 1,800 SF open interior that can accommodate up to 130 people.

Members of the Darien Garden Club select plantings for foundation beds around the Barn.

2021 The McPherson family gifts an additional five acres of land bordering the north side of the Mather Homestead property. This land is owned by the Mather Homestead Foundation (1.1 acres) and the Darien Land Trust (3.8 acres).

Several large trees near the Main House are removed, including a number of mature holly trees obscuring the north façade and a large evergreen, called ‘Big Ben,’ which endangered the east side of the house. New plantings are selected by Second Nature Landscape Design.

The historic stone wellhead is repointed, and a new mahogany top is installed.¹

A beehive and a wildflower garden are installed in the northwest corner of the property, with a wood chip path leading north from the parking area along the west property edge.²

2022 Mather Homestead Foundation receives a grant from the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office to conduct a Conditions Assessment on the Main House.

Outdoor classroom bench seating in a wooded clearing north of the Barn is installed by Dennis Glassmeyer as an Eagle Scout Project.

In May 2017, the McPherson siblings donated the Mather Homestead (six acres) to be operated by the newly created Mather Homestead Foundation as a museum dedicated to community education.³ The mission statement of the Foundation is as follows:

The Mather Homestead Foundation is dedicated to the preservation of the Mather Homestead, established in 1778 and home to seven generations of Mather descendants, as a treasured place for historical education and enjoyment. The Foundation will raise awareness of the Homestead’s unique history, dating back to the Revolutionary War, and Stephen Tyng Mather’s legacy as an important conservationist and the founder of our modern National Parks System.⁴

Programming began shortly after the property’s transfer. The first public event at the Homestead, a Harvest Festival and Open House, was held in November 2017.⁵ In anticipation of the number of children attending the event, the playhouse porch was repaired.⁶

In February 2018, the Mather Homestead Foundation launched a fundraising effort to treat and manage the Sunken Garden to “[reflect] the landscape designs of the many Mather generations.”⁷ The weeding and replanting of the garden was led by board member Andy Huntington (**Figures 3.5a,b**). By the spring of 2018, programming at the Mather Homestead had expanded to include events for children and families, scholarly lectures, and school field trips.⁸ Following the completion of rehabilitation efforts for the Sunken Garden, the first ‘garden parties’ were held in June 2018.⁹

In 2020, the Homestead built the Elizabeth W. Chilton Education Center (**Figures 3.6a,b**). This new building replaced the 1905 barn built by Stephen T. Mather. Designed to resemble an 18th-century dairy barn on the exterior, the building’s open-plan interior accommodates programming and events for up to 130 people. The purpose of the new Education Center, also called ‘the Barn,’ according to the Mather Homestead Foundation, is to “[support] the Mather Homestead’s vision of becoming a preeminent center for historical education in Fairfield County.”¹⁰ The official opening of the Barn, along with other programming in 2020, was held outside due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of the Garden Club of Darien selected plantings for the foundation beds around the Barn, with attention to sun and shade, soil, drought- and deer-resistance, and aesthetic qualities such as texture, color, and bloom

times.¹¹ Planting selections included Pennisetum ‘Piglet’ grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*), Korean Spice viburnum (*Viburnum carlesii*), Hummingbird Summersweet (*Clethra alnifolia* ‘Hummingbird’), Fringed Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra exima*), Japanese Andromeda (*Pieris japonica compacta*), Birchleaf Spirea (*Spiraea betulifolia* ‘Tor’), and Inkberry Holly (*Ilex glabra* ‘Gem Box’).¹² Additional planting in 2021 included screening around the electric box, propane tank, and air-conditioning unit behind the Barn.

In 2021, the Foundation removed several large trees near the Main House, including several holly trees “which obscured the North side of the Mather Homestead and ‘Big Ben,’ a dangerously large evergreen ... which threatened the East side of the house.”¹³ These areas were subsequently replanted. The palette for new plantings relied on non-invasive species, “many of which [were] already represented in the Mather Homestead gardens as planted by Bertha Mather.”¹⁴ Photographs prior to and following tree removal, and a section sketch of the planting by Second Nature Landscape Design, illustrate the interventions on the east façade of the Main House (**Figures 3.7a,b**). Other small-scale additions in 2021 included a bee hive and a hexagonal wildflower garden in the northwest portion of the Homestead property; a path surfaced in wood chips leading from the visitor parking area along the west property edge to the apiary; and two picnic benches.¹⁵

At the end of 2021, the McPherson family gifted an additional five-acre meadow, located between the Homestead and the neighboring residences to the north. The five acres are now jointly owned by the Mather Homestead Foundation (1.1 acres) and the Darien Land Trust (3.8 acres). Together with the six acres of the Mather Homestead property, and the ten-acre Mather Meadows to the southeast, a total of 21 acres of the colloquially named ‘four corners’ of Darien are now preserved in perpetuity.¹⁶

In 2022, the Mather Homestead Foundation received a grant from the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office to conduct a Conditions Assessment on the Main House and other structures on the Homestead property. The assessment, performed by Architectural Preservation Studios of New Canaan, provided a list of necessary projects to preserve the historic house. This assessment did not include or pertain to the significant historic landscape of the Mather Homestead.¹⁷ In early 2023, the Mather Homestead Foundation renovated the historic playhouse structure to be “a place of learning and play for future generations of children.”¹⁸

Today, the Mather Homestead hosts a variety of community and educational programming. Lectures are often presented by experts on local, state, and national history, the National Park Service, landscape art, historic preservation, and more. Many events at the Homestead are family-friendly, and others are intended for children only. The Homestead offers various programs for Scouts, and the property has been altered by multiple Eagle Scout projects. Another branch of programming at the Mather Homestead is its Homesteading Workshops, intended to provide hands-on experience in activities that would have been typical for the self-sufficient Mather family in 1778. Past and ongoing workshops have included breadmaking, fiber arts, beekeeping, and establishing a cutting garden. Other frequent programming includes yoga classes, plein air painting, book clubs, and reenactments.



Figure 3.1a 2017 aerial. Courtesy Google Earth.



Figure 3.1b Property shown in detail of 2017 aerial. Courtesy Google Earth.



Figure 3.2a 2018 aerial. Courtesy Google Earth.



Figure 3.2b Detail of 2018 aerial. Newly planted trees are present along the east edge of the Darien Land Trust parcel south of Stephen Mather Road. Note the clear distinction between maintained turf lawn around core buildings and rough turf in the north property. Courtesy Google Earth.



Figure 3.3a 2020 aerial. Courtesy Google Earth.



Figure 3.3b Detail of 2020 aerial. Disturbed area around the newly constructed Education Center. The lawn space between the Little House and the former barn is truncated by the new building. Along the northeast property boundary with Brookside Road, the stand of trees has filled in. Courtesy GE.



Figure 3.4a 2022 aerial. Courtesy Google Earth.



Figure 3.4b Detail of 2022 aerial. Asphalt-paved parking area is in place on the west side of the Education Center. Rectangular raised beds are present south of the playhouse. Four distinct turf management protocols are evident, with maintained lawn around the Homestead core, recently mown rough turf north to the playhouse, taller grass in the northeast portion of the property, and meadow in the northwest portion owned by the Darien Land Trust. Mown paths are cut through this latter meadow area, as well as the Land Trust parcels on the south side of Stephen Mather Road. Courtesy Google Earth



Figure 3.5a A 2018 photograph of the Sunken Garden prior to weeding and replanting. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 3.5b Spring 2018 photograph of the Sunken Garden after weeding and replanting. A wooden bench is installed at the terminus of the east-west axis through the garden. Dense groundcovers have been removed and young shrubs replanted. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 3.6a 2017 photograph of the barn built in 1905 by Stephen T. Mather. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 3.6b The Elizabeth W. Chilton Education Center, or the Barn, was built in 2020. A concrete walk wraps around the south and east sides of the building, providing access to two entries. Note the beds, not yet planted, between the walk and the facades. A wide strip of turf lawn divides the walk from the gravel drive. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 3.7a 2021 photograph of the east house façade, showing work underway to remove large trees near the building. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 3.7b 2021 section drawing by Diana Galik of planting design by Heather O'Neill, Second Nature Landscape Design. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 3.8 This 2022 oblique aerial photograph captures the Darien ‘Four Corners,’ with the Mather Homestead pictured at the upper left corner of the image. Courtesy Tyler Sizemore, Hearst Connecticut Media, *The Darien Times*.¹⁹



Figure 3.9 A 2022 aerial of the Mather Homestead in snow. Several raised beds enclosed by a rectangular fence appear in the lower right corner of the image, between the playhouse and the Education Center. Courtesy Tyler Sizemore, Hearst Connecticut Media, *The Darien Times*.

C. 2024 Landscape Character & Features

The Mather Homestead property functions in 2024 as a house museum and education center for the public. The Main House is open for tours by appointment, and the newly constructed Education Center is used for regular events and programming. The property features a variety of land uses, encompassing the formal Sunken Garden, open lawns suitable for outdoor events, meadow areas to the north, and circulation for visitor parking. Auxiliary support areas include the woodshed, trash and recycling storage shed, and the paved visitor parking area to the west of the Education Center.

The 2024 Homestead property is bounded by Brookside Road to the east and Stephen Mather Road to the south. Dense woodland along the west property boundary encloses the Goodwives River. The north boundary is formed by a shared driveway that enters from Brookside Road and proceeds northwest along a diagonal-straight-diagonal alignment to several private residential properties. Outward views across Stephen Mather Road to the south and southeast encompass two portions of the Mather Meadows. Views to the north are occupied by large neighboring houses. To the east, across Brookside Road, the property designed by Bertha Mather in 1931 is clearly in view.

The Sunken Garden complements the architecture of the Main House, extending on a west axis from the brick terrace. This enclosed garden space functionally integrates the Main House with the adjacent landscape. Viewed as one composition, the Main House and Sunken Garden are organized along intersecting east-west and north-south axes. The Sunken Garden is generally but not strictly symmetrical, displaying a repetition of forms with variations in species composition and vegetation heights. Moving west, an open lawn descends from the terraced grade of the Sunken Garden to a flat plane, formerly the location of the tennis court. This lawn extends to a wooded knoll which separates the core property from the driveway entrance on Stephen Mather Road. The gravel driveway, which has a second entrance on Brookside Road, divides the Main House and Sunken Garden from the rest of the Homestead property.

The overall topography of the Mather Homestead landscape is relatively flat, with a gentle slope downward to the west where it drops more steeply to meet the Goodwives River. Artificial grading for a non-extant tennis court and greenhouse is evident, indicating previous intervention. The Sunken Garden is terraced slightly above the surrounding lawn. A natural knoll with rock outcroppings divides the tennis lawn from the drive entry on Stephen Mather Road.

The soils in Darien, western Norwalk, and southern New Canaan are mainly fine sandy loams with areas of stony or rocky slopes. The Mather Homestead property's soils, based on National Cooperative Soil Survey data, include Paxton and Montauk fine sandy loams with 3 to 8 percent slopes (**Figures 3.10a,b**). Other soil types on the property include Woodbridge fine sandy loam with 3 to 8 percent slopes; Ridgebury, Leicester, and Whitman soils with 0 to 8 percent slopes (extremely stony); and Ridgebury fine sandy loam with 0 to 3 percent slopes.

Paxton and Montauk series soils are very deep, well-drained loamy soils on upland hills. These soils support agriculture, as many gently sloping or nearly level areas are often cleared for cultivated crops, hay, and pasture. Steeper and uneven areas are typically wooded, with forests largely comprised of oak, hickory, maple, pine, and birch.²⁰

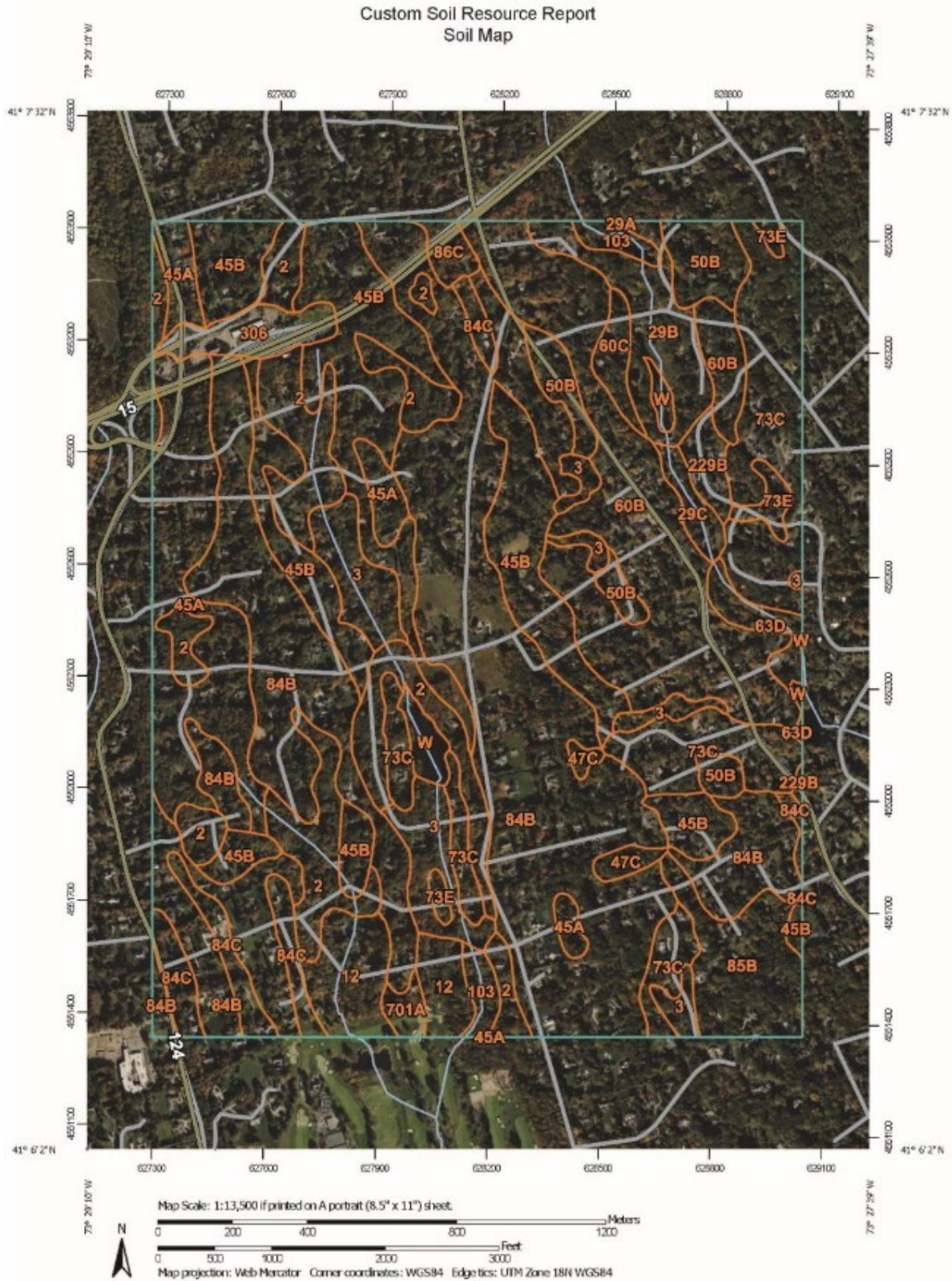


Figure 3.10a Soil map, USDA Web Soil Survey, Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Figure 3.10b Detail of the soil map shows the central swath of Paxton and Montauk fine sandy loams (84B) through the Mather Homestead property. Along the east bank of the Goodwives River, soils include Woodbridge fine sandy loams (45A and 45B); Ridgebury, Leicester, and Whitman soils (3); and Ridgebury fine sandy loam (2). Courtesy USDA Web Soil Survey, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

A wide swath of Paxton and Montauk fine sandy loams, at 3 to 8 percent slopes, runs parallel to the Goodwives River through northeast Darien to include the Mather Homestead lands (**Figure 3.10a, b**). Woodbridge soils are very deep, gently sloping, and moderately well-drained loamy soils on upland hills. Like the Montauk and Paxton series, these soils are often used for cultivation or community development, and some areas are wooded.²¹ Ridgebury, Leicester, and Whitman soils are very deep, poorly drained soils, typically found in upland depressions and drainage ways.²²

Internal views within the Mather Homestead property generally extend over expanses of open lawn, providing minimally obstructed views of the buildings and structures onsite. Mature deciduous trees frame or obscure building facades as visitors move throughout the landscape. A strategically placed shrub mass and several mature trees function to block views of neighboring houses from particular

vantage points. Open outward views to the south and southwest range over adjacent Mather Meadows parcels.

Vegetation in the Mather Homestead landscape consists of large deciduous trees, coniferous evergreen trees, flowering trees and shrubs, herbaceous perennials, formal evergreen hedges, maintained lawn, rough mixed-species turf, and tall meadow grasses and forbs. Mature red maples, dating to the period of significance, line the property boundaries along Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads. Ornamental trees and shrubs, such as Japanese tree lilac, Kousa dogwood, and pink dogwood, are arranged alongside the gravel driveway. The Sunken Garden, partially replanted in 2018, contains small evergreen shrubs, flowering shrubs, herbaceous perennials and groundcovers. Remnants of linear pine and spruce plantings indicate a historic windbreak. Foundation beds around the 2020 Education Center are planted with broadleaf evergreen shrubs, ornamental grasses, and herbaceous perennials. Stands of trees and the woodland edge along the west property boundary contain a variety of invasive and volunteer vegetation.

Circulation within the Mather Homestead landscape includes historic features such as the gravel driveway, with entries from Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads; the flagstone walk from the south façade of the Main House to the west porch wing; the brick terrace, designed by Middleer in 1962; a bluestone walk from the brick terrace to the west façade of the Little House, interrupted by the gravel drive; and the grass-carpeted ground plane in the Sunken Garden. Contemporary additions to the circulation network include the asphalt-paved parking area; the poured concrete walk around the Education Center; and the mulched “Nature Trail” from the parking area to the apiary.

The Main House of the Mather Homestead, built in 1778, is the central building on the property. The smaller guest house, known as the Little House, sits atop the footprint of the earlier gardener’s cottage, located north of the Main House on the opposite side of the driveway. To the west, the Elizabeth W. Chilton Education Center, built in 2020, is situated in the approximate location of the historic barn built by Stephen Mather in 1927. Northeast of the Education Center is the playhouse, a small structure recently restored for active use by children who visit the Homestead. Other non-habitable structures within the property include a woodshed; a storage shed for trash and recycling; a root cellar; a grease pit, or a sunken walled area historically used for automotive maintenance; picket fences; and free-standing stone walls.

The Mather Homestead landscape features many small-scale features, including picnic tables and wooden benches placed for reflection and relaxation. Historic lampposts are present near the Main House and along the driveway. A Free Little Library encourages community and youth engagement. Moveable patio furniture on the brick terrace provides flexibility for various activities. The historic wellhead serves as a focal point for guided tours. For self-guided visitors, an interpretive plaque beside the driveway entry from Brookside Road offers an overview of the site and Stephen Tyng Mather’s contributions. South of the playhouse, a small garden plot with rectangular in-ground beds recalls the historic productive use of the landscape. On the west side of the visitor parking area, a hand-painted sign directs visitors to the natural trail, which leads north from the parking area. Nearby is a bag dispenser for dog waste. Signage in the parking area indicates spaces designated for accessible parking. North of the Education Center, an “outdoor classroom” features wooden benches and split lot benches arranged in a circle. At the end of the “nature trail,” there is an apiary and a hexagonal raised bed planted with wildflowers.



Figure 3.11a 2023 aerial. Courtesy Google Earth.



Figure 3.11b Detail of 2023 aerial. Clear distinction between Darien Land Trust meadow (northwest corner of property) and MHF northeast corner. Courtesy Google Earth.

D. LCA 1: Domestic Grounds, Sunken Garden & House Surrounds

D1. LCA 1 Land Use

LCA 1 is a diverse area featuring various land uses. This area encompasses the Main House, the brick terrace, the Sunken Garden, the Little House, and lawn areas to the west of the Sunken Garden and north of the driveway and Little House. The Main House functions as a house museum, offering tours by appointment. The brick terrace, featuring outdoor seating and the historic stone wellhead, serves as a versatile space for tours and activities as well as circulation to and from the Main House and Sunken Garden. The Sunken Garden provides a tranquil setting for individual reflection, plein air painting, or evening events such as Garden Teas. The Little House is currently occupied by a tenant, and its surrounds are not distinct from the publicly accessible areas of the Mather Homestead property. The lawn area west of the Sunken Garden, formerly the location of a tennis court, is still levelly graded and used for large outdoor events such as musical performances, Scout camping trips, and outdoor dining during annual Garden Tea events. The lawn between the Little House and the Education Center, north of the driveway, is also used for outdoor programming, in association with the Education Center, and by children using the playhouse. The lawn areas north of the Little House are not specifically programmed but occasionally provide parking space for large events and otherwise provide space for free circulation (Figure 3.12).



Figure 3.12 This image from the 2022 Fall Harvest Festival shows visitors on a tractor bed, seated on haybales. The playhouse appears in the background. Courtesy MHF.

D2. LCA 1 Spatial Organization

This core area of the Mather Homestead is bounded by Stephen Mather Road to the south and by Brookside Road to the east. A white picket fence marks the south and east property boundaries, transitioning to a low stone wall further north along Brookside Road as it enters LCA 3. The west boundary is marked by the gravel drive, tracing its entry from Steven Mather Road, crossing the drive and passing along the east side of the Education Center extending north to the face of the playhouse. The north boundary of LCA 1 follows the perimeter of the rectangular lawn south of the playhouse, shifting southward to the north side of the former greenhouse, then continuing east to the boundary with Brookside Road. This north boundary is defined by early 20th-century land use and lacks clear distinction today, as various turf management protocols for the lawn and meadow areas produce differing groundcover conditions that do not align to the LCA boundary. Certain component areas within LCA 1 are defined by physical boundaries such as vegetation, circulation, and buildings. The Sunken Garden is a discrete space, surrounded by a tall perimeter hedge that obscures outward views. The brick terrace is partially enclosed to the east and south by the wings of the Main House. The front (south) and side (east) yards of the Main House are defined by the façades of the house and picket fence along Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads. West of the Sunken Garden, a rectangular lawn area is defined by the distinct artificial grading at the perimeter of the former tennis court. Lawn areas north of the little house lack clear definition. The natural knoll further west is defined by the elevated grade, rock outcroppings and is partially encircled by a gravel drive. The surrounds of the Little House, which is privately rented, are not distinct from the publicly accessible areas of the Mather Homestead property.

D3. LCA 1 Views & Vistas

Internal views within LCA 1 are organized along axes that are aligned with the adjacent architecture of the area, or they extend seamlessly into other LCAs. In the vicinity of the Main House, views from the adjoining brick terrace are organized along either an east-west axis, from the steps descending into the Sunken Garden to a bench at the west terminus, or along a north-south axis, aligned with the bluestone walk from the terrace to the Little House. Large deciduous trees obscure or frame the façades of the Main House and Little House, depending on one's vantage from Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads. From Brookside Road, the east façade of the Main House is framed overhead by the canopy of a red maple tree. From the intersection of Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads, a large red maple obscures the Main House. This tree and a third red maple together frame the view of the south façade from Stephen Mather Road.

From the east drive entry, the Little House is nearly entirely within view, while the Main House is partially obscured by a large holly tree (*Ilex opaca*.) (**Figure 3.13**). On the north side of the drive, a mature Japanese lilac (*Syringa reticulata*) frames views of the north lawn and meadow beyond (**Figure 3.14**). Westward views continue along the driveway until it curves north and is blocked from sight by the Little House and a pink flowering dogwood tree (*Cornus florida var. rubra*). Looking east from the driveway across Brookside Road, the view of the neighboring house designed by Bertha Mather McPherson is on axis with the drive and framed by two fence posts.

Southward external views from within LCA 1 range over the parcels to the south and southeast that comprise two sections of the Mather Meadows property owned by the Darien Land Trust. Beyond these parcels, the roof lines of nearby houses and barns are visible, some of which historically belonged to members of the Mather family. The nearby Mathers Pond is not visible from the Homestead due to the

growth in height of vegetation in the south meadow parcel. Views to the east from the Homestead include the house designed by Bertha Mather in the 1930s and extend east along Stephen Mather Road in the direction of the family cemetery. The distant views to the east and south from the intersection of Stephen Mather and Brookside Road are extenuated by the parallel lines of stone walls, split-rail fences, and picket fences lining the properties.

Views to the north from LCA 1 extend over the open lawn and meadow of LCA 2 and LCA 3, beyond the contemporary property line and across a shared private drive to several large residential properties constructed in the early 2000s. From certain vantages, a strategically placed viburnum shrub mass obscures the south façade of the most visible neighboring residential house. This house occupies many other sightlines within the Homestead property. Views to the west from LCA 1 extend into LCA 2, including the Education Center, parking area, and wooded areas beyond. The only exception is the west view from the tennis lawn, which is interrupted by the sharp rise of a natural knoll that divides the tennis lawn from the gravel entry drive.

D4. LCA 1 Topography & Natural Systems

The topography of LCA 1 generally slopes downward to the west from a relative high point at the intersection of Stephen Mather and Brookside Road. This gradual slope can best be seen along the property's southern fence, which runs parallel to Brookside Road. Exceptions to this overall slope are present, such as a naturally occurring knoll at the southwest corner of LCA 1. Evidence of human intervention is also noted, such as the artificial grading of the former tennis court and the level plane of the Sunken Garden, with the west end being graded slightly higher than the adjacent lawn space (**Figure 3.15**).

D5. LCA 1 Vegetation

Vegetation in LCA 1 is diverse and varies between the component areas. Mature deciduous trees, largely composed of red maples, line Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads. The east entry from Brookside Road is framed by a mature Japanese lilac (*Syringa reticulata*) tree on the north side and a 38" red maple (*Acer rubrum*) approximately 45 feet south of the drive. A large stump, nearer to the drive on the south side, is evidence of a former maple tree. A large mature holly (*Ilex americana*) stands on the south side where the walk to the staff entrance begins. Along the driveway, there is a mature Japanese pagoda tree (*Styphnolobium japonicum*) to be removed due to failing health on the south side, a multi-trunk pink dogwood (*Cornus florida var. rubra*) near the Free Little Library structure, and a Kousa dogwood (*Cornus kousa*) on the east side of the flagstone walk to the Little House entry. Another large red maple (*Acer rubrum*) is present north of the Little House.

Plantings within the Sunken Garden include a tall perimeter yew hedge (*Taxus x media* 'Hicksii') enclosing a border planting of small broadleaf evergreen shrubs, flowering shrubs or perennials, woody-stemmed flowering shrubs, and groundcover plantings that comprise the interior of the garden (**Figure 3.16**). Around the outer perimeter of the Sunken Garden, there are several trees placed at irregular intervals. A flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) is present to the north, a crab apple (*Malus spp.*) tree stands to the northwest, and to the south there is a 47-inch black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*) young sugar maple, and a 22-inch weeping Higan cherry (*Prunus x subhirtella* 'Pendula') tree. Just east of the garden, a larger trimmed yew (*Taxus spp.*) punctuates the space between the garden and exterior porch.

Outside of the Sunken Garden, there are several formal planting compositions in connection with the Main House. The brick terrace is framed to the north by a linear bed planting of boxwood, which is aligned to a symmetrical foundation planting along the north façade of the Main House. Ornamental plantings are present within perimeter beds around the brick terrace, and in foundation beds along the façades of the Main House. Foundation plantings between the terrace and the Main House include hydrangea. The bed within the north retaining wall above the Sunken Garden is planted with a flowering dogwood and herbaceous perennials, while the bed atop the south retaining wall features only small shrubs and perennial plants for a seasonal sequence of blooms. The north edge of the brick terrace is lined with trimmed boxwood backing the herbaceous planting. At the east façade of the Main House, shrub plantings line the railing above the steps to the below-grade entrance. Foundation plantings in mulched beds with no distinct edge extend to the southeast corner of the house. Mown turf lawn covers the ground plane between the beds and the road. The north façade of the Main House features a linear planting of boxwood along the foundation, with spirea at the northeast corner and hydrangea at the northwest corner.

Two mature red maple trees (*Acer rubrum*) frame the south façade of the Main House, with vining plants on the trunk of the westernmost maple tree (**Figure 3.17**). A small flowering sweetbay magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*) sits in a mulched circular bed in the lawn near the southeast corner, and a young Kousa dogwood (*Cornus kousa*) is present along the flagstone walk. The turf lawn extends to the fence line along Stephen Mather Road. The west porch features ferns along the foundation and a large domed yew at the southwest corner. A 37-inch sugar maple (*Acer Saccharum*) dominates the west entrance of the Little House, balanced by an equally large sugar maple tree in the lawn to the north. To the west, at a corner of the drive, there is a 16-inch flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) surrounded by mown turf. Foundation plantings are also present along the façades of the Little House, including boxwood and andromeda, forming a hedge around the perimeter of the house.

D6. LCA 1 Circulation

Circulation in LCA 1 includes pedestrian walks and the eastern portion of the vehicular driveway that runs through the Mather Homestead property. A gravel drive enters the Homestead property from Brookside Road, opening at approximately 30 feet wide and narrowing to roughly 15 feet as it passes between two fence posts. Extending from the north side of the drive, a wide rectangular parking area wraps around the garage and east façade of the Little House; this parking area is not cordoned off or distinct from public circulation. The driveway proceeds west between the Main House and Little House. A linear stone curb edges the driveway to either side. As the gravel drive passes alongside the Sunken Garden, it curves slightly northward to arrive at a wider landing which once terminated at the historic barn structure that is no longer present. The drive then descends an 8-to-10 percent slope into LCA 2 alongside the south façade of the Education Center.

Several flagstone walks extend perpendicularly from the driveway in LCA 1. Opposite the Little House parking area, a flagstone walk extends south from the driveway to the kitchen door and contemporary staff entrance at the east façade of the Main House. A concrete set of steps descends below grade along the east façade to a basement entrance. Further west along the driveway, two flagstone walks extend in opposite directions. A narrow walk, roughly two-and-a-half feet wide, leads north to the Little House front entry at the west façade. Another four-foot-wide flagstone walk extends south to the brick terrace adjoining the Main House. The brick terrace is paved in a running bond pattern with a soldier-course

border. Flagstone pavers cut in a hexagonal pattern frame the foundation of the historic stone wellhead. Fieldstone steps between stone retaining walls descend from the brick terrace into the Sunken Garden. Adjacent to the brick terrace is the west porch wing of the Main House. The covered porch area is also paved with brick, laid in a herringbone pattern with a double-row sailor and soldier course border. Extending south from the porch is a narrow fieldstone walk, overgrown with grass and varied in width, which wraps around the southwest corner of the house to the south façade. This walk perpendicularly joins a wider fieldstone walk, which leads from a gate in the picket fence along Stephen Mather Road and climbs three steps to the front entry portico of the Main House (**Figure 3.18**). All other areas in LCA 1 are surfaced with turf, leaving circulation undefined and allowing visitors to wander freely over the lawns.

D7. LCA 1 Landscape Structures & Buildings

The most prominent structure in LCA 1 is the Main House of the Mather Homestead. The house is two stories tall, with yellow clapboard siding. Aspects of the eighteenth-century New England vernacular farmhouse style are retained, such as the gabled main block with a central chimney. The twentieth-century additions of the north ell and west porch are also retained. The front (south) entry to the Main House is elevated above grade and framed by simple columns supporting a pedimented portico.

North of the Main House is the Little House, built circa 1963-65 under the direction of Bertha Mather on the foundation of the former gardener's cottage. The Little House, now rented privately by a tenant, has a main one-story block and an attached two-car garage on the east side.

Centered in the brick patio between the north ell and west wing of the Main House is the historic stone wellhead. The well is not in active use, but it remains present in the center of the brick terrace as an interpretive structure for guided tours. The present wellhead reflects alterations made in 1927 when Stephen T. Mather replaced the original roof-and-lattice wooden well-house with a stone wellhead and an arched wrought-iron frame. A wooden two-door well cap with iron hinges covers the well opening.

Other structures in LCA 1 include the white picket fence and gate, and stone retaining walls on either side of the steps descending from the brick terrace into the Sunken Garden.

D8. LCA 1 Small-Scale Features

Small-scale features in LCA 1 include several historic lampposts, a wrought iron table and chairs on the brick terrace, moveable outdoor seating in the covered west porch wing, interpretive signage near the drive entry from Brookside Road, and a Free Little Library structure beside the lamppost west of the Little House (**Figures 3.19 and 3.20**). Additional signage includes small hanging wooden signs identifying a number of trees and shrubs, a sign indicating the employee entrance on the east façade, the National Register plaque, a hanging signpost near the intersection, and two signs on the picket fence directing traffic to enter via Brookside Road. Wooden benches are present at the west end of the Sunken Garden and near the Free Little Library structure (**Figure 3.21**).



Figure 3.13 View from the drive entry on Brookside Road looking west. The Main House appears to the left and the Little House to the right. The white wooden picket fence marks the perimeter of the Mather property along Brookside Road at the east and continues around the perimeter along Stephen Mather Road to the south. HL 2023.



Figure 3.14 The view north from the Main House east lawn is framed by the Little House garage to the left and an antique flowering lilac tree (*Syringa reticulata*) to the right. This view extends across the mown turf and meadow beyond. A split rail fence marks the north end of the parcel. The neighboring residential property is visible in the background. HL 2023.



Figure 3.15 The graded terrace of the former tennis court is located west of the Sunken Garden. Today, the area is used to host lawn and tented events. The large historic Japanese Pagoda tree (*Styphnolobium japonicum*) in decline, appears to the east with the Education Center to the west. HL 2023.



Figure 3.16 View into the Sunken Garden looking southwest from the Main House terrace across the central turf panel toward the tree grove on the natural knoll beyond. HL 2023.



Figure 3.17 View of the white wooden picket fence and gate along the Stephen Mather Road south frontage. The Main House is framed by mature sugar maple trees (*Acer saccharum*). Several irregularly placed individual boulders prevent parking along the side of Stephen Mather Road. HL 2023.



Figure 3.18 A wooden picket gate at Stephen Mather Road marks the pedestrian entrance to the Main House. The walk is paved with cut fieldstone between the gate and the main porch. A second walk segment, mostly obscured by grass, extends into the midground and provides access between the Main House front entrance and the covered west porch. HL 2023.



Figure 3.19 Small-scale features in LCA 1 include the free-standing Free Little Library cupboard and colonial-style light fixture atop a white-painted wood standard in the background. East of the Library cupboard is a multi-trunk pink flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida rubra*). HL 2023.



Figure 3.20 The colonial-style light fixture and wood standard located on the west side of the walk between the drive and brick terrace differs in style from the light fixture located further west along the drive. HL 2023.



Figure 3.21 A movable teakwood bench is placed midway along the drive between the Main House and the Education Center in LCA 1 in this image. HL 2023.

E. LCA 2: Cultivated Garden, Pasture & Barn Surrounds

E1. LCA 2 Land Use

LCA 2, historically designated for farming and land cultivation operations, has evolved to accommodate both its historical uses and contemporary needs. The Education Center serves as the primary destination and focal use zone of LCA 2. Visitors gather for a variety of formal and informal uses of the Education Center. This area is accessed through two routes: one from the south via the gravel drive from Stephen Mather Road, and another from the east along the drive from Brookside Road through LCA 1. The southern drive entrance passes through a landscape corridor framed by the naturalized knoll to the east and a line of Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) trees to the west. Central to LCA 2 is the Chilton Education Center, with a modest parking area and an adjacent outdoor educational space to the north. The Education Center functions as the primary venue for visitor information and public lecture series, educational sessions, public outreach events and private rental use.

North of the Education Center is a small outdoor educational classroom, carved from an area of mature evergreen trees that had become inaccessible due to overgrown understory and invasive species growth. Cleared and enhanced with wooden bench seating as part of an Eagle Scout project in 2022, the space is now utilized for outdoor educational venues and informal recreational uses. Northwest of the outdoor classroom area, extending to the playhouse and border of the adjacent meadow in LCA 3, the landscape is only modestly used for small-scale instructional gardening. Moving northeast of the playhouse, the landscape is an open turf area that was once home to cultivated vegetable beds.

West of the Education Center and parking, the landscape slopes toward the Goodwives River, characterized by a mix of lowland deciduous hardwoods and an overgrown understory with invasive species. A recent project to suppress the invasive Japanese knotweed (*Raynouria japonica*) has opened an area through which a mulched trail provides access from the Education Center and parking to the Apiary within the adjacent meadow. A concrete grease pit and a historic root cellar are located west of the parking and drive. This portion of LCA 2 is relatively large, extending 250 feet west of the Education Center. The majority of this area is classified as wetlands and is contained within a conservation easement.

E2. LCA 2 Spatial Organization

The eastern boundary of LCA 2 follows the entry drive north from Stephen Mather Road, curving east and continuing north to encompass the Education Center and its surrounding sidewalks. This area extends northward to include the playhouse and the adjacent area to the north, historically an orchard, now divided roughly in half between a rough turf lawn and taller meadow grasses. Extending eastward, LCA 2 includes an area of lawn that formerly hosted cultivated gardens and a grape arbor. The north border of LCA 2 is not distinguishable by any physical boundary but rather traverses through meadow and lawn areas according to the historic arrangement of productive cultivated vegetable crop fields. The north perimeter extends westward and includes the west boundary along the property line and stone wall at Goodwives River, reaching south to Stephen Mather Road and encompassing the stone wall at this south border. The delineation of this boundary aligns with the historical division between cultivated gardens, livestock areas, barns, equipment storage, and greenhouse operations and production.

E3. LCA 2 Views & Vistas

Outward views from LCA 2 are altered today. To the north, the historic vista is foreshortened by abutting residential properties (**Figure 3.22**). On the southern side, the view extends over the picket fence at Stephen Mather Road and beyond Mathers Meadows, reaching the woodland that defines the conservation land holdings. Looking east, upslope toward the Main House, the Sunken Garden border hedge sits below the elevation of the Main House. The turf foreground extends north across the west elevation of the Little House. Dominating this view is the multi-trunked Japanese pagoda tree (*Styphnolobium japonicum*) located at the curve in the driveway. Views west are obstructed by the densely wooded landscape within the wetland boundary of the river. The line of Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) along the west drive edge becomes a prominent foreground focus along with the mature maple trees on the knoll in the adjacent LCA 1.

E4. LCA 2 Topography & Natural Systems

The overall topography in LCA 2, like LCA 1, gently slopes downward to the west and is part of the watershed of the Goodwives River. The slope becomes steeper westward, particularly below the drive. On the east side of the drive, the topography rises sharply up the side of the knoll that divides LCA 1 and LCA 2. The finish floor elevation of the Education Center aligns with the parking area to the west, creating a level transition. To the east, the topography modestly slopes between LCA 1 and LCA 2. Moving northwest, the ground begins at a higher elevation than the Education Center and has a slight downward slope westward, with interruptions caused by the construction and finish grading of the septic system drainage field in this area. The gravel driveway rises approximately five feet from the entrance at Stephen Mather Road to reach the parking area at the Education Center. Erosion of the loose gravel surface is apparent where the grade steepens along the drive.

E5. LCA 2 Vegetation

Vegetation in LCA 2 is a diverse mix, reflecting a combination of remaining plantings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Homestead landscape, successional vegetative growth, and contemporary plantings around the Education Center. Plantings evident from the earlier era include the line of spruce trees (*Picea abies*) ranging in caliper inches from 18 to 28 inches along the edge of the drive from Stephen Mather Road to the root cellar. North of the Education Center is a mixed planting of white pine (*Picea strobus*) with calipers of 22 and 24 inches, sugar maples (*Acer saccharum*) with calipers of 32 and 22 inches, and smaller saplings. A 24-inch red maple (*Acer rubrum*) is present. There are multiple stumps of evergreen trees recently removed for safety reasons and to clear space for the outdoor educational area. Standing alone north of the playhouse is a twin-trunk ash (*Fraxinus spp.*) with calipers of 28 and 22 inches. The wooded area to the west along the river is a mix of deciduous trees, including red maple (*Acer rubrum*), trident maple (*Acer buergerianum*), tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) and black locust (*Robinia pseudocacia*). The predominant tree cover consists of Norway maples (*Acer platanoides*), accompanied by a dense ground cover of invasive brambles and herbaceous species, including Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*).

The border around the 2020 Education Center is planted with a mix of ornamental shrubs and herbaceous materials. The original planting selections included Pennisetum 'Piglet' grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*), Korean Spice viburnum (*Viburnum carlesii*), Hummingbird Summersweet (*Clethra alnifolia* 'Hummingbird'), Fringed Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra exima*), Japanese Andromeda (*Pieris japonica compacta*), Birchleaf Spirea (*Spiraea betulifolia* 'Tor'), and Inkberry holly (*Ilex glabra* 'Gem Box'). present. Additionally, at the north side of the building, ornamental plants are strategically used for screening the propane tank and air conditioning compressors.

E6. LCA 2 Circulation

The gravel drive that enters from Stephen Mather Road is approximately 18 feet wide (**Figure 3.23**). This drive intersects at a right angle with the segment of the driveway approaching from the entry on Brookside Road. The 18-foot-wide portion of the gravel drive continues north alongside an asphalt-paved parking area on the west side of the Education Center. The parking area comprises four accessible spaces with access aisles, and one traditional parking space (**Figure 3.24**).

Paved pedestrian circulation in LCA 2 is limited to the concrete sidewalks around the south and east perimeter of the Education Center. The north door of the Education Center opens onto turf lawn. An informal mulch path extends north from the asphalt parking area toward the apiary in the meadow beyond.

E7. LCA 2 Landscape Structures & Buildings

The primary structure in LCA 2 is the Chilton Education Center, constructed in 2020 to serve as a visitor and education facility. This building was designed to resemble the circa 1927 dairy barn that it replaced. The Mather family playhouse is located northeast of the Education Center, historically situated at the southern edge of an orchard planting (**Figure 3.25**). This small wooden structure features a ceiling height of nearly seven feet and includes a covered porch across the front. The building is set on a concrete foundation elevated two steps above grade. Other historic structures in this area include a below-grade grease pit originally used for automobile maintenance and a root cellar. The root cellar is partially below

grade, with mounded earth over the east side and an opening to the west where the grade drops. The cellar is not currently accessible, being overgrown with vegetation, although it has recently been exposed due to the removal of a large tree that had grown on top of it.

The driveway entry from Stephen Mather Road is bordered by a wooden split rail fence along its western edge. This fencing runs alongside a below-grade water infiltration chamber system. A stone wall runs along the southern property line with Stephen Mather Road. A broad opening to the west allows access to the lower landscape in LCA 2. The stone wall is indicated on the property survey as running along the west property boundary at the river; however, field confirmation was impeded by vegetative cover.

E8. LCA 2 Small-Scale Features

LCA 2 incorporates various small-scale features, including a dog waste station with a bag dispenser, a modest wood storage structure featuring an open face and shed-style roof, and a wooden bin for trash and recycling containers (**Figure 3.26**). Small wooden benches, constructed as part of a 2022 Eagle Scout project, serve as seating for the outdoor educational area located north of the Education Center (**Figure 3.27**). Along the west side of the drive, individual stones are placed to deter parking. Signage in LCA 2 includes a hand-painted sign indicating the mulch ‘Nature Trail’ leading to the apiary, markers for designated accessible parking spaces, and small metal botanical labels identifying selected plantings in foundation beds around the Education Center.



Figure 3.22 In this west view from LCA 2, the playhouse is seen in the background. To the west (left) is the dense vegetation mass marking the remnant linear planting of evergreen trees. To the east (right) a dogwood tree marks the west façade of the former greenhouse. HL 2023.



Figure 3.23 A gravel drive provides access from Stephen Mather Road to the western portion of the Homestead property. The gravel drive has an informal line of mature spruce trees to the west. To the east, the topography rises to the natural knoll and rock outcroppings dividing LCA 2 from LCA 1. HL 2023.



Figure 3.24 Visitor parking is located on the west side of the Education Center. The asphalt-paved parking area is set within the gravel driveway. Concrete walks provide access to entries at the south and east façades of the Education Center. A mature pine tree is seen north of the parking area, marking the southern end of a remnant evergreen allée. HL 2023.



Figure 3.25 The playhouse is situated in the mown turf lawn, formerly marking the southern end of a small orchard of fruiting trees as seen in the 1934 aerial. This simple wood structure is set on a concrete footing and has a small wood porch, two steps above finish grade. The playhouse was recently restored in (0000) and is open for use by visiting children today. HL 2023.



Figure 3.26 A small woodshed structure, wooden trashcan bin and recycling bins are located on the western edge of the drive on the west side of the Education Center. The mound of earth and organic material atop the root cellar can be seen at the left side of the image. A hand-painted wooden sign directs visitors north (right) to the apiary. HL 2023.



Figure 3.27 This image captures a circular arrangement of wooden benches in a clearing located north of the Education Center. The area serves as an outdoor educational space. Trees in the foreground comprise a remnant portion of the former evergreen allée in this area. HL 2023.

F. LCA 3: Large-Scale Crop Production & Woodland

F1. LCA 3 Land Use

LCA 3 is comprised of two land parcels managed respectively by two non-profit organizations, namely the Darien Land Trust and the Mather Homestead Foundation. The Darien Land Trust is dedicated to conservation efforts. The western third of its landholding, along the river, is maintained as a wooded area. The eastern two-thirds of the Darien Land Trust parcel is managed as a meadow under careful stewardship. Adjacent to the Darien Land Trust parcel, the eastern area of LCA 3 is managed by the Mather Homestead Foundation. This area is characterized by an open turf field that is contiguous with the larger Mather Homestead parcel containing the core of the Homestead in LCA 1 and the Chilton Education Center surrounds in LCA 2. This eastern area of the parcel is used for overflow parking during several annual Foundation events. Maintenance and activities within the Darien Land Trust parcel adhere to conservation goals and objectives, including passive recreation and providing an apiary to support pollination efforts.

F2. LCA 3 Spatial Organization

LCA 3 is organized according to the historic agrarian land use and management practices of the Mather family, encompassing a large portion of the overall land holdings. The south boundary of LCA 3 is defined by the historic delineation between larger field crops, including flax, and the cultivated vegetable and table crops to the south. To the north, while the historic land holdings included the now-residential adjacent parcels, the boundary of LCA 3 is defined by the Homestead property line which follows the

shared residential driveway and includes the northern edge of the accessway to the Darien Land Trust parcel. The eastern border of LCA 3 aligns with the stone wall along Brookside Road, and the western boundary corresponds to that of the Darien Land Trust parcel along the watercourse.

F3. LCA 3 Topography and Natural Systems

The managed turf and meadow area of LCA 3 exhibits an east-to-west slope, mirroring the drainage patterns of LCA 1 and LCA 2. This slope directs sheet flow westward towards the Goodwives River. The subtle change in grade, with a twelve-foot drop over 350 feet and a gradient of 3.4 percent, made the land suitable for growing and managing agricultural crops. West of the meadow planting, the topography becomes steeper beneath the wooded cover. Nearing the river, the terrain levels out, forming a floodplain as part of the stream course landscape. In the northeast corner, west of the shared driveway apron at Brookside Road, there is a catch basin and long asphalt apron. This is mirrored by a similar basin on the opposite side of the private drive.

F4. LCA 3 Views and Vistas

The meadow and turf-covered landscape is a valued viewshed as seen from the core area of the Mather Homestead. Despite the visual intrusion of the residential lots beyond the wooden split rail fence, this open vista harkens to the historic character observed when looking north over the cultivated vegetable plots, framed by wooded cover to the west and by canopy trees lining Brookside Road and the cemetery to the northeast (**Figure 3.28**). From within LCA 3, southward views encompass the Little House, Main House and Education Center structures neatly arranged on a mown turf lawn with shade trees. Views to the west include the wooded area between the meadow and Goodwives River. To the east, a border of successional trees and a stone wall function to screen views of Brookside Road along the length of LCA 3. The panoramic south view across the mown turf of LCA 2 extends east to capture of the white wooden picket fence surrounding the residential house designed by Bertha Mather McPherson.

F5. LCA 3 Vegetation

The vegetative cover in LCA 3 is best described in three distinct typologies: the mixed deciduous canopy and understory wetland cover (**Figure 3.29**), which spans the area between the meadow planting and the river's edge; the managed meadow; and the bi-annually mown turf cover as the extension of the Mather Homestead core area. Situated at the southwest corner of the meadow, a hexagonal garden plot, defined by wooden timbers, contains herbaceous pollinator plant species and functions as an educational exhibit. The garden plot, along with two beehives, was added in 2021. A single red maple (*Acer rubrum*) is located at the northern edge of the meadow closest to the shared private drive. Along the stone wall at Brookside Road, there is a stand of invasive Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) trees that also contain slippery elm (*Ulmus rubra*) and black locust (*Robinia pseudocacia*) growing between four large stumps. Below this tree grouping, there is a mix of invasive species, herbaceous plants and vines, including poison ivy (**Figure 3.30**).

F6. LCA 3 Circulation

A path, loosely mulched with wood chips, extends northward from the parking area on the west side of the Education Center in LCA 2. This path brings visitors to the apiary at the southwest corner of the meadow planting, part of the Darien Land Trust parcel. Beyond this path, there are no other clearly defined vehicular or pedestrian pathways within LCA 3.

F7. LCA 3 Landscape Structures and Buildings

The predominant landscape structure in LCA 3 is a three-rail, unfinished split rail fence (**Figure 3.31**). This fence lines the shared drive along the north end of the meadow and turf lawn, extending from the western property boundary to approximately eight feet short of the stone pier at Brookside Road. There are no buildings present within either the Darien Land Trust holdings or the extended turf field managed by the Mather Foundation.

F8. LCA 3 Small-Scale Features

Notable small-scale features in LCA 3 include two wooden beehives and backless wood benches as components of the apiary located at the southwest corner of the meadow (**Figure 3.32**).



Figure 3.28 This north-facing image captures the transition between the mown turf lawn of LCA 2, in the foreground, and the managed meadow of LCA 3 in the midground. In the background, neighboring residences are clearly visible from the core of the historic Homestead property. HL 2023.



Figure 3.29 The vegetative cover along the western border within the conservation area is a mix of deciduous hardwood trees overhead and an invasive species understory. Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) has recently been cleared, as evident in the foreground. HL 2023.



Figure 3.30 Stone walls along Brookside Road delineate the northern portion of the east property boundary. Behind the wall, successional vegetative growth includes a combination of black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), and Norway maples (*Acer platanoides*), accompanied by a variety of mixed herbaceous species below. Four large tree stumps remain inside of the wall. HL 2023.



Figure 3.31 A three-rail split cedar fence defines the northern boundary of the property. The asphalt shared drive provides access to the three residential parcels north of the Homestead. To the south of the fence lies the right-of-way for vehicular access to the Darien Land Trust parcel. HL 2023.



Figure 3.32 A small apiary, featuring two beehives, a pair of wooden benches, and a central garden bed planted with pollinator species, is located at the southwest corner of the meadow. The 1.5-acre meadow extends to the north property boundary. HL 2023.

G. 2024 Landscape Boundaries & Rights-of-Way

This narrative describes the current legal boundaries of the Mather Homestead property as shown on L8 Existing Boundaries & Rights-of-way. A 2024 parcel map illustrates the residential context that surrounds the Homestead and conserved Darien Land Trust parcels in 2024 (Figure 3.33).²³

The Mather Homestead Foundation owns 7.159 acres of the property, encompassing the domestic property core area and extending north along Brookside Road to include former productive fields of crops and hay. The Darien Land Trust conserves the northwest parcel of the property, comprising 3.867 acres. This acreage includes a right-of-way that runs parallel to the southern edge of the shared private driveway, connecting the Land Trust parcel with access to Brookside Road.

On the west side of the Mather Homestead property, two boundaries define the Goodwives River corridor and associated wetland: the wetland boundary at its edge; and the 50-foot-wide setback from that wetland boundary. To the south and southeast, the Darien Land Trust also holds two parcels that comprise Mather Meadows. The McPherson family donated these parcels, which were historically part of the Mather family holdings, in 2003.

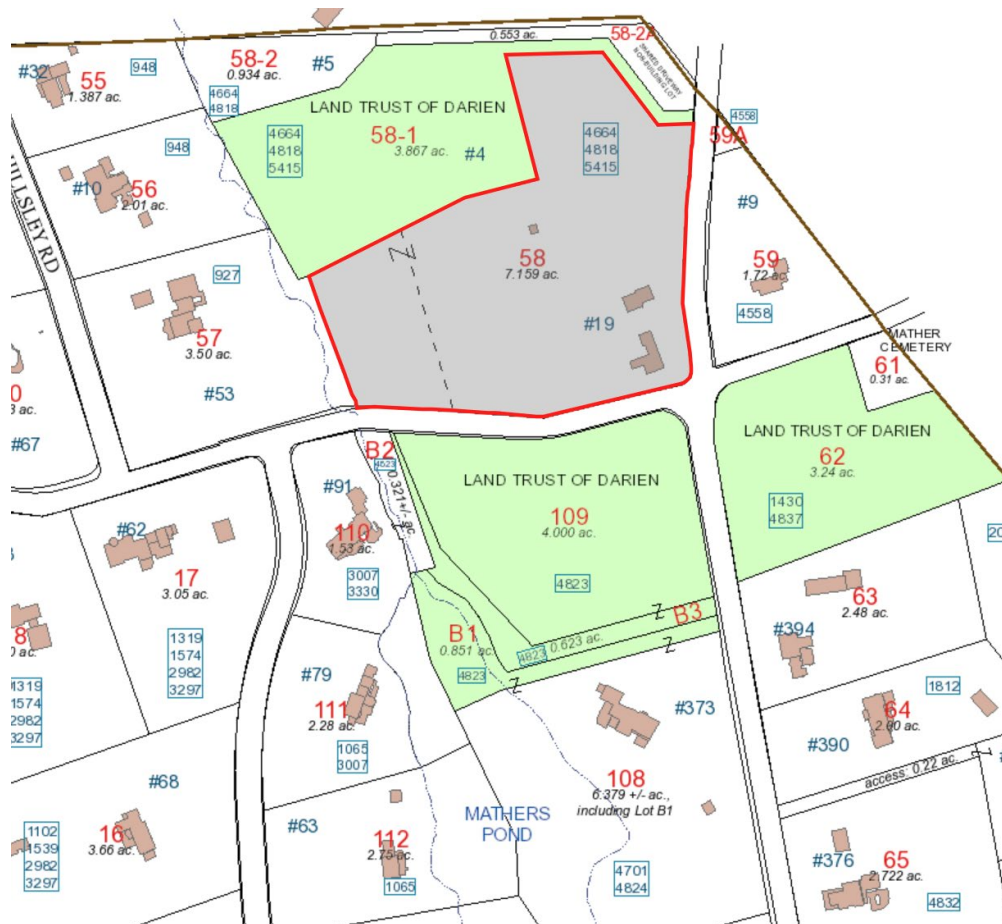


Figure 3.33 This parcel map shows the Mather Homestead (Lot 58) in gray, with the abutting Land Trust parcel to the north (Lot 58-1) and neighboring Mather Meadows to the south and southeast (Lots 109 and 62) shown in green. Mathers Pond appears to the south. Residential properties surround the Homestead and these three conserved parcels. Courtesy Darien Connecticut Property Records Search.

The original land parcels owned by the Mather family are not fully known. However, as Stephen Mather constructed the pond, that land and the adjacent parcels were all likely in Mather hands at that time. Additionally, Dorchester Road to the west of the pond was laid out and named by Bertha Mather McPherson and Edward McPherson. It is also possible that land acreages further north, east and west of current holdings were in the Mather family at some point in history. Discovering the full extent of the Mather family land ownerships through time requires detailed grantee and grantor index deed research in Darien, but also possibly in Norwalk and New Canaan.

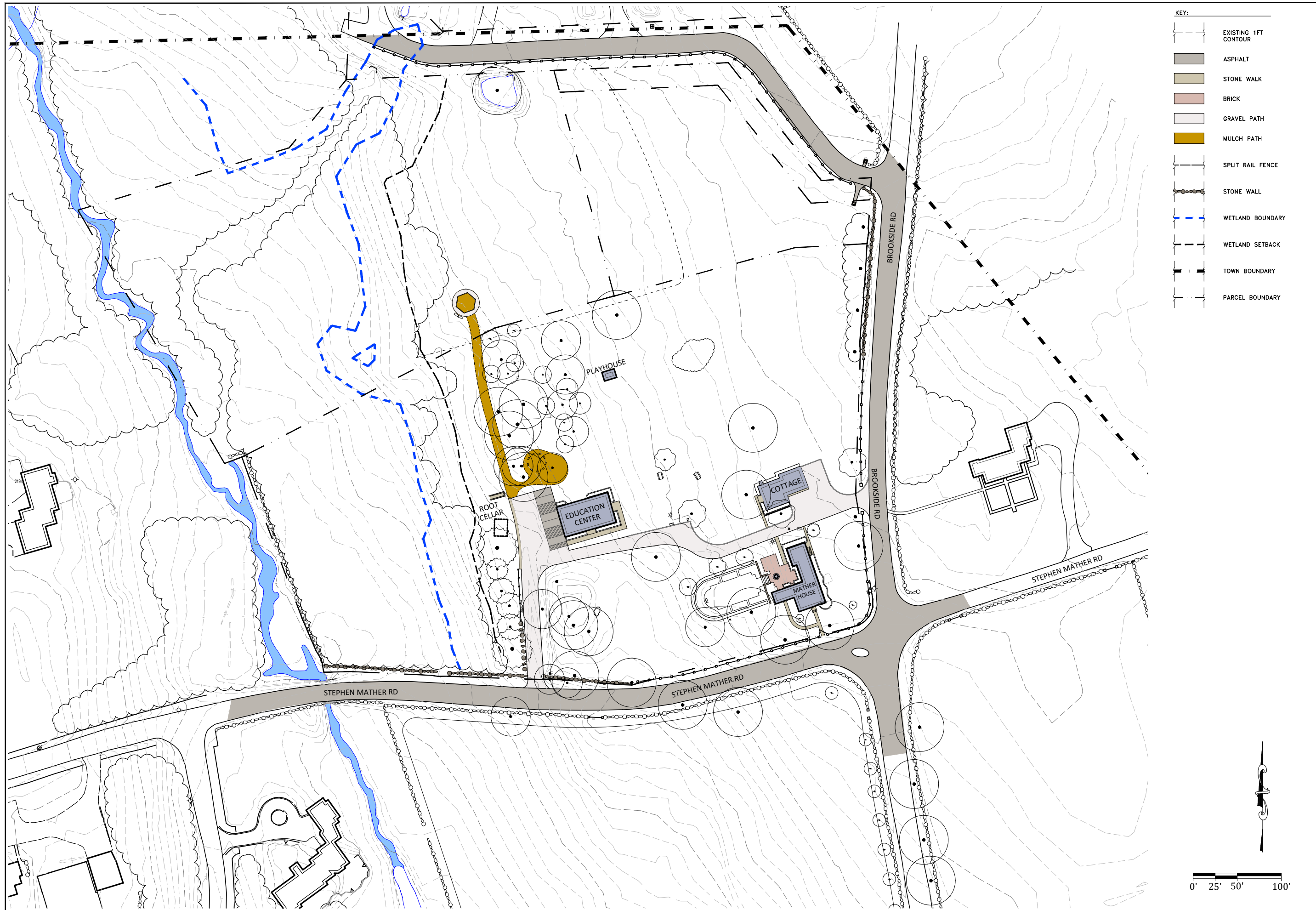
H. Conclusion of Mather Homestead Foundation Landscape Character

This illustrated narrative brings forward an understanding of the Mather Homestead landscape from the 2017 MHF stewardship period origin in 2017 to the current landscape of 2024. In the years following the property transfer to the Mather Homestead Foundation, the opening to the public has advanced local contact with and appreciation for the legacy of the Mather family. With preservation in the forefront new public uses have been welcomed and accommodated. The understanding of the current landscape developed through this illustrated narrative and plans serves as a building block for the following chapter that focuses on continuity and change over time.

Chapter 3 Endnotes

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- ² Mather Homestead Facebook post, 20 June 2021, accessed 23 Oct. 2023.
- ³ “About the Mather Homestead,” The Mather Homestead website, accessed 23 Oct. 2023.
- ⁴ “Our Mission Statement,” The Mather Homestead website, accessed 23 Oct. 2023.
- ⁵ Mather Homestead Facebook post, 26 Sept. 2017, accessed 25 Oct. 2023.
- ⁶ Mather Homestead Facebook post, 19 Oct. 2017, accessed 25 Oct. 2023.
- ⁷ Alfred Branch, “Darien’s Mather Homestead Seeks to Restore Its Gorgeous Gardens,” *Patch Darien, CT*, 5 Apr. 2018, accessed 23 Oct. 2023, <https://patch.com/connecticut/darien/dariens-mather-homestead-seeks-restore-its-gorgeous-gardens>; Mather Homestead Facebook post, 28 Feb. 2018, accessed 23 Oct. 2023,
- ⁸ Mather Homestead Facebook post, 17 April 2018, accessed 25 Oct. 2023; Mather Homestead Facebook post, 16 May 2018, accessed 25 Oct. 2023.
- ⁹ Mather Homestead Facebook post, 2 June 2018, accessed 25 Oct. 2023.
- ¹⁰ “The Elizabeth W. Chilton Education Center, aka., the barn,” The Mather Homestead website, accessed 23 Oct. 2023.
- ¹¹ Leslie McCarthy with Susan Doelp, Garden Club of Darien, “Garden Club of Darien gifts plantings to Mather Homestead,” *The Darien Times*, 2 March 2021, accessed 23 Oct. 2023, <https://www.darientimes.com/news/article/Garden-Club-of-Darien-gifts-plantings-to-Mather-15992882.php>.
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- ¹³ “Mather Homestead Property Beautification Project,” The Mather Homestead Website, accessed 23 Oct. 2023.
- ¹⁴ “Mather Homestead Property Beautification Project,” The Mather Homestead Website, accessed 23 Oct. 2023.
- ¹⁵ Mather Homestead Facebook post, 20 June 2021, accessed 23 Oct. 2023.
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- ¹⁷ “Help Us Preserve/Restore the 1778 Mather Homestead,” The Mather Homestead website, accessed 23 Oct. 2023.
- ¹⁸ “Playhouse Renovation Project,” The Mather Homestead website, accessed 23 Oct. 2023.
- ¹⁹ Photographs by Tyler Sizemore, Hearst Connecticut Media, included in article by Raga Justin, “Darien Family donates 16 acres around Mather Homestead for permanent environmental protection,” *The Darien Times*, 19 Feb. 2023, accessed 23 Oct. 2023, <https://www.darientimes.com/news/article/Darien-family-donates-16-acres-of-meadow-around-16931889.php>.
- ²⁰ USDA, “Paxton Series,” National Cooperative Soil Survey, April 2015, https://soilseries.sc.egov.usda.gov/OSD_Docs/P/PAXTON.html; USDA, “Montauk Series,” National Cooperative Soil Survey, May 2015, https://soilseries.sc.egov.usda.gov/OSD_Docs/M/MONTAUK.html.
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MATHER HOMESTEAD CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

Darien, Connecticut

Client
Mather Homestead
19 Stephen Mather Road, Darien Connecticut 06820

Team
Heritage Landscapes LLC
Preservation Landscape Architects & Planners

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Drawing Title:
**L6 2024
Landscape Plan
with Circulation**

Date:
January 2024



- KEY:
- EXISTING 1FT CONTOUR
 - DECIDUOUS TREE
 - EVERGREEN TREE
 - ORNAMENTAL TREE
 - STUMP
 - MEADOW
 - TURF MOWN
 - VEGETATED BED
 - MIXED NATIVE/INVASIVE UNDERSTORY
 - SPLIT RAIL FENCE
 - STONE WALL
 - WETLAND BOUNDARY
 - WETLAND SETBACK
 - TOWN BOUNDARY
 - PARCEL BOUNDARY
 - PICNIC TABLE
 - BENCH
 - FREE LITTLE LIBRARY



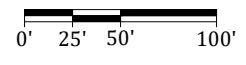
MATHER HOMESTEAD CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

Darien, Connecticut

Client
Mather Homestead
19 Stephen Mather Road, Darien Connecticut 06820

Team
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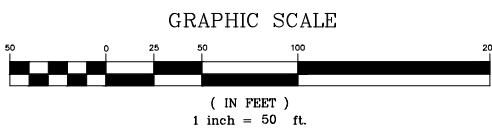
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Drawing Title:
L8 Boundaries & Rights-of-way

Date:
January 2024

MAP
Prepared for
McPHERSON FAMILY LIMITED PARTNERSHIP
Depicting
Lot Line Adjustments
and Land to be Conveyed to
THE MATHER HOMESTEAD FOUNDATION, INC.
and
THE DARIEN LAND TRUST



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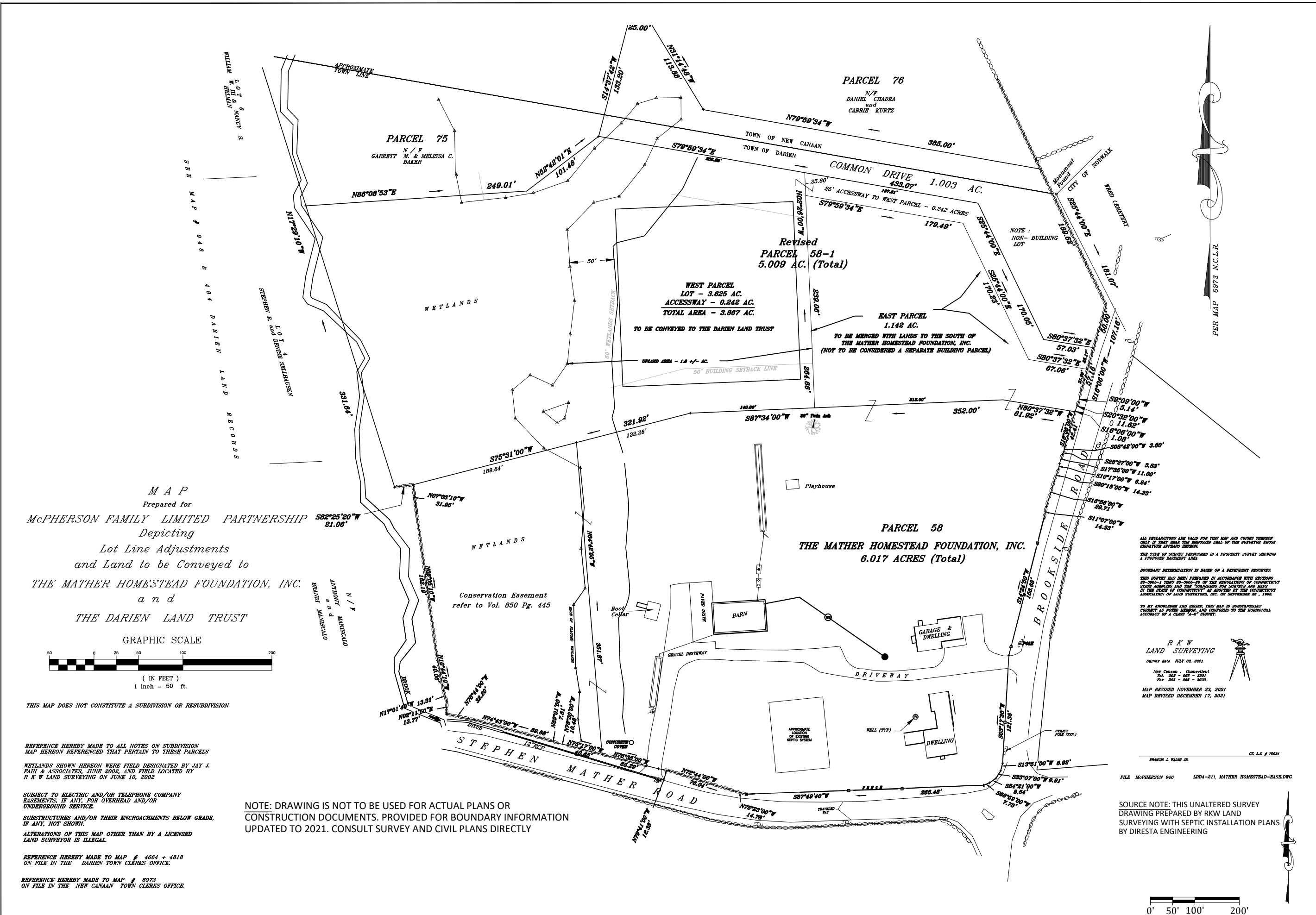
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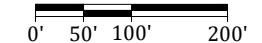


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R K W LAND SURVEYING
Survey date JULY 30, 2021
New Canaan, Connecticut
Tel: 203 - 946 - 3824
Fax: 203 - 946 - 3503
MAP REVISED NOVEMBER 23, 2021
MAP REVISED DECEMBER 17, 2021

FILE: McPHERSON 040 LDD4-21\ MATHER HOMESTEAD-RASE.DWG

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Mather Homestead ♦ Cultural Landscape Report

4 ♦ Landscape Analysis, Significance & Integrity



A. Introduction to Landscape Analysis, Significance & Integrity

This section compares the existing conditions of the Mather Homestead property to the landscape understood to exist during the Stephen T. Mather era (1906-1930) when Stephen Tyng Mather directed its development. The analysis identifies specific features remaining from that period and includes a visual comparative study to assess continuity and change between historic and present-day landscapes.

Two accompanying plans illustrate this comparative analysis, using four captures of the Mather Homestead landscape to understand overall landscape change since the property's transfer from Stephen Tyng Mather to Betha Mather. This side-by-side visual comparison readily reveals differences in land uses, spatial organization, visual relationships, and the presence of other features in the landscape. These plans are:

- *L8 Aerial Comparison 1934 & 1965*
- *L9 Aerial Comparison 1990 & 2017*

This section begins with an overall analysis of these two plans, followed by a detailed analysis organized by landscape character area. A collection of repeat photographs provides historic views from Stephen Tyng Mather's and Bertha Mather's eras alongside recent photographs taken from the same vantage point to the degree possible. Viewed side-by-side, these photographs depict landscape character then and now and aid in the evaluation of landscape integrity, as discussed below.

B. Overall Landscape Continuity & Change

A sequence of four aerial photographs captures the evolution of the Mather Homestead landscape from 1934 to 2017, illustrating changes in spatial organization and land use over time. Plan L8 shows aerials from 1934 and 1965, and Plan L9 shows aerials from 1990 and 2017.

In 1934, the southern portion of the Homestead property exhibits the greatest density and diversity in land use. Notably visible are the structures of the Main House, the caretaker's cottage (Little House), the

greenhouse, and the barn and garage. To the west of the Main House, the Sunken Garden with its interior planted beds is discernible. Various linear elements, including the trellis, pergola, and walks connecting the various structures and buildings, contribute to the spatial organization of the landscape. Mature shade trees line the property boundaries along Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads. West of the Sunken Garden, a rectangular panel of maintained lawn indicates the location of the tennis court and stands out distinctly from the rough ground plane and scattered trees on the knoll further west.

Moving north, the majority of the property is characterized by open cultivated crop fields. The northernmost fields exhibit a uniform tone, while those closer to the domestic core show variability, indicating heterogeneous plantings. The woodland edges framing the agricultural fields are straight and well-defined, with very few trees or shrubs within the fields. West of the barn, a rectangular paddock, likely used for livestock, abuts an open silvo-pasture, an open woods that allows light for grass growth and provides shade, that descends to the edge of Goodwives River. Two clearly defined linear plantings of evergreen trees are seen west and north of the barn. The gravel drive is prominently visible, with its two entries from Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads. A secondary arm of the drive wraps around the north side of the barn, connecting with a walk that extends east to the greenhouse.

On the south side of Stephen Mather Road, the L-shaped open fields owned by the Mather family are delineated by stone walls. At the southwest corner of the western field, the absence of tree growth seems to allow access and views to Mathers Pond. The linear plantings of shade trees along Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads are mirrored on this parcel. On the east side of Brookside Road, an open pasture exhibits a worn track around the perimeter where Bertha Mather was known to ride horseback.

By 1965, notable changes are evident, due to the maturation of vegetation and new decisions in managing the landscape. The diverse cultivation that formerly characterized the crop fields in the northern portion of the property has diminished, with the majority of the area now seemingly cultivated as hay. Three small plots north of the greenhouse appear to each be planted with different crops. The growth of woodland edges around the fields has encroached slightly on the open space.

The evergreen allées to the north and west of the barn have matured and cast deep shade over the entry drive and the adjacent mown field. To the west, the formerly open silvo-pasture has filled in with successional woodland growth, obstructing visual and physical access to the Goodwives River. The Sunken Garden, redesigned by Lilian Egleston and Bertha Mather McPherson in 1938, now features an open lawn panel bordered by planted beds and enclosed by the same perimeter hedge. The wisteria-laden pergola extending west from the Little House remains in place, although the presence of other linear elements is difficult to discern. A hedge runs along the south and east façades of the greenhouse, which is anchored by an evergreen tree near the west façade. To the northwest of the greenhouse, the playhouse structure is situated at the southwest corner of a remnant orchard.

On the south side of Stephen Mather Road, the formerly clear distinction of the fields is obscured by the growth of bordering woodland edges, which also hinders views and access to Mathers Pond. On the east side of Brookside Road, the pasture no longer displays the perimeter track.

In 1990, a greater degree of woodland encroachment is observed around the property's edges. Northern fields, once under hay cultivation, demonstrate successive and nonuniform growth. Closer to the domestic core, cultivated plots are no longer present. Along the east side of the evergreen allée extending north from the barn, a pale strip likely denotes a walk, discernible from the adjacent lawn. The

northern border of the lawn itself is irregular and nonlinear. The playhouse is present at the north edge of the lawn, with a single tree on its east side. A larger shade tree is seen further north within the open field. Between the playhouse and the Little House, the greenhouse is no longer present. To the south, the fields on the east and west sides of Brookside Road exhibit successive growth similar to the north fields of the Homestead property. The woodland edges also display encroachment.

By 2017, the northernmost portion of the Homestead property has been sold off and subdivided into three residential properties. A shared driveway extends west across the former hayfields from Brookside Road. Near the northwest corner of the remaining fields, a small cluster of shrubs or small trees is now evident. The two evergreen allées north and west of the barn, once prominently distinct amid cultivated row crops and pasture, are now enveloped by stands of shade trees. The knoll to the east of the drive entry from Stephen Mather Road is now populated with shade trees and obscured by dense canopy.

There is minimal distinction in texture or tonality between the lawn around the structures of the domestic core, including the Little House and playhouse, and the rough groundcover of the remaining fields to the north. The playhouse stands alone in rough lawn, with only one small shrub visible on the east side. Further east, a freestanding viburnum mass is present. South of the playhouse, a flowering tree denotes the approximate former location of the west side of the greenhouse. The barn is partially obscured by surrounding canopy trees. Along the east property boundary with Brookside Road, several gaps in the once-consistent line of shade trees are evident.

Vegetation in the vicinity of the Main House exhibits significant growth and density, obscuring the roof of the house. While the Little House remains visible, several mature shade trees to the north and west significantly alter the character of the house surrounds. South of the Homestead property, the open fields on either side of Brookside Road are preserved in meadow groundcover, having been purchased by the Darien Land Trust from the McPherson family in 2003.

C. LCA 1: Domestic Grounds, Sunken Garden & House Surrounds

C1. LCA 1 Land Use

During Stephen Tyng Mather's era, the land use of LCA 1 was primarily a functional domestic landscape surrounding the Main House. Ornamental plantings and decorative horticulture were evident in the Sunken Garden and greenhouse, while productive garden plots were located north of the Little House, then the caretaker's cottage. The open lawn areas of LCA 1 provided versatile space for recreational and leisure activities for the Mather family members. A fenced tennis court was present west of the Sunken Garden, although the frequency of its use during Stephen T. Mather's direction of the property is unclear. A 1929 Mather family home video captures what appears to be a live deer within the fenced area.

The use of LCA 1 today fails to reflect the service function of productive vegetable gardens north of the Little House. The current function of the property as a house museum finds some historic precedent during Bertha Mather's time on the property. In 1978, a bicentennial celebration with historical reenactments took place when the Homestead was still a private residence. By this time, the property had already been designated a National Historic Landmark and had been inscribed on the National Register. While efforts to memorialize Stephen Tyng Mather were initiated by 1930, marked by the

commissioning of the first Mather Memorial Plaques in 1930 and their installation by 1932, the Mather Homestead did not receive such a plaque until 2022.¹

The Main House is no longer a private residence, although the Little House is currently rented by a tenant. The surroundings of both houses, however, lack distinction from the publicly accessible Homestead property and do not function as private domestic landscapes.

The brick terrace situated between the Main House and the Sunken Garden offers adaptable use with movable outdoor seating. The use of this area during Stephen Mather's era is unclear. The Sunken Garden originally featured geometric beds throughout its design. The open central lawn panel was introduced in 1938 when Bertha Mather commissioned landscape architect Lilian Egleston to redesign the garden.

Programming related to the Education Center, which is located in LCA 2, occasionally extends into areas of LCA 1 such as the lawn to the east and the tennis court on the south side of the drive. Other programming in LCA 1 includes annual Garden Teas, hosted in the Sunken Garden.

C2. LCA 1 Spatial Organization

The south, east, and west boundaries of LCA 1 retain their historical clarity. To the east, Brookside Road serves as the boundary. To the south, Stephen Mather Road delineates the area. The west boundary is marked by the gravel drive entry from Stephen Mather Road and by the east façade of the Education Center. The boundary to the north, however, lacks its historically clear distinction once determined by the southern borders of cultivated garden plots. The present turf lawn flows seamlessly into the turf groundcover of LCA 2.

In the domestic core of LCA 1, several space-forming elements from the Stephen T. Mather era are now absent. These include two parallel white wooden latticework trellises, which ran north-south between the Main House and the Little House; the white wooden pergola for climbing wisteria, extending west from the Little House to the northwest corner of the driveway; and the grape arbor, extending north from the Little House (**Figure 4.1a.b**).

The gravel drive from Brookside Road was historically the primary arrival route for visitors to the Mather Homestead. Today, the addition of a visitor parking area in LCA 2 causes some confusion and circulation conflicts when visitor traffic enters from both Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads.

The enclosed space of the Sunken Garden remains largely as it was historically, although the taller enclosing hedge lends a greater sense of seclusion (**Figure 4.2a,b**). Within the Sunken Garden, the geometric divisions of space into smaller planted beds observed historically are absent today (**Figure 4.3a-c and Figure 4.4a-c**).

C3. LCA 1 Views & Vistas

The southward view from LCA 1 has remained relatively unchanged since 1930, extending across Stephen Mather Road to a parcel of the preserved Mather Meadows. To the southwest, another section of Mather Meadows now occupies the pasture once used by Bertha Mather for horseback riding. Despite the change in groundcover vegetation, the preservation of the lot as undeveloped open space maintains continuity with the historically unobstructed view.

Views to the west once extended over LCA 2 and LCA 3, beyond Goodwives River to a neighboring property on the hillside. Today, that view is obstructed by dense woodland vegetation (**Figure 4.5a,b**). Eastward views from the Homestead were altered in the 1930s when Bertha Mather designed and oversaw the construction of a house for her aunt, but that property has remained relatively unchanged since.

Interior views within LCA 1 have primarily been affected by the growth and maturation of vegetation. The increased height of the Sunken Garden hedge now obscures views northwest to the barn, or Education Center, and west to the tennis lawn. To the north, expansive views range over LCA 2 and LCA 3, although the historic depth of this view is foreshortened by neighboring residential homes to the north.

C4. LCA 1 Topography & Natural Systems

The topography of LCA 1 exhibits continuity with the historic landscape. The overall grade is generally level, gently sloping to the west toward the Goodwives River. This slope is interrupted due to anthropogenic grading at the former greenhouse foundation, the former tennis lawn, and the Sunken Garden. At the southwest boundary of LCA 1, the grade rises to a natural rocky knoll before dropping sharply to the gravel entry drive in LCA 2.

C5. LCA 1 Vegetation

Vegetation in LCA 1 during the Stephen T. Mather era consisted of edible and ornamental plantings, open lawn, and shade trees planted at the property boundary along Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads. Although the broader spatial arrangement of vegetation from that period largely endures, the absence of vegetable gardens and the increased prevalence of shade trees and ornamental plantings have somewhat distorted this pattern.

The domestic landscape included edible plantings in vegetable garden plots and a grape arbor on the north side of the Little House. Ornamental and horticultural plantings were found in the Sunken Garden. A yew hedge enclosed the perimeter of the Sunken Garden. Other ornamental plantings included climbing wisteria on a pergola extending east from the Little House to the barn. Foundation plantings around the Main House included conical evergreens and low shrubs. Linear plantings of shade trees along Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads framed the Main House to the south and east. The ground plane included areas of mown turf and scattered shrubs.

To the west of the Sunken Garden, a tennis court built by Stephen Mather was, by 1930, not in regular use. The fenced area, which included much of the knoll further west, appears heavily shaded by trees in a 1929 Mather family home video.

Today, vegetation in LCA 1 is characterized by ornamental plantings, shade and flowering trees, and open stretches of mown lawn. Mature deciduous trees line Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads, with several gaps and large remaining stumps indicating tree loss.

Although the organization of the Sunken Garden has evolved since the Stephen T. Mather era, several plantings demonstrate continuity with the original design, such as the tall yew hedge enclosing the perimeter. The interior of the garden is planted with a flowering border (**Figure 4.3a-c and Figure 4.4a-c**).

The climbing wisteria was removed along with the supporting pergola that formerly extended west from the Little House. The pink dogwood tree at the west end of the pergola, however, is still present.

To the north, the hedge border that flanked the former greenhouse was removed along with the structure. The evergreen tree that anchored the west façade of the greenhouse has also been removed or since demised. A 16-inch dogwood (*Cornus florida*) marks the approximate location of the west façade of the greenhouse.

East of the playhouse, a viburnum mass obscures the view of the neighboring house to the north from certain perspectives. This dense shrub planting, surrounded by open lawn, diverges from the historically cultivated character of the area north of the Little House.

C6. LCA 1 Circulation

In 1930, circulation through LCA 1 was primarily guided by the gravel entry drive, gravel paths framing the north lawn panel, and the fieldstone paths connecting the Main House and Little House. This historically simple circulation pattern is retained today, despite the loss of walks around the Little House.

The general pattern of the entry drive from Brookside Road remains today, although the addition of a widened parking area on the east side of the Little House has altered the drive.

The circulation around the Little House during the Stephen Mather era, then the caretaker's cottage, included gravel walks that encircled the perimeter of the house as well as a walk extending south from the west façade entry to the gravel drive. This walk was aligned with a fieldstone walk leading north from the Main House to the drive (**Figure 4.6a,b**). Another narrow gravel path led west along the wisteria pergola to the corner of the drive. In the Bertha Mather McPherson era, these walks were paved with slate. Today, a slate walk leads north through the brick terrace to the drive and resumes on the north side of the drive leading to the Little House (**Figure 4.7a,b and 4.8a,b**).

After Joseph Wakeman Mather's 1891 barn burned down in 1905, Stephen Tyng Mather built a new barn in 1929, located further west. This opened an area between the new barn and the Little House which was treated as maintained lawn. Narrow gravel walks on the east and north borders of this lawn panel connected the greenhouse entry with the main gravel drive and the service drive north of the new barn.

In the vicinity of the Main House, a fieldstone path led from Stephen Mather Road to the south façade entry portico, and another path wrapped around the west side of the house to the porch wing. The brick terrace between the Main House and the Sunken Garden dates to 1962, during Bertha Mather's direction of the landscape.

Visitors to the Mather Homestead historically entered along the drive from Brookside Road. This arrival has been altered by the addition of a visitor parking area in LCA 2, which prompts many visitors to enter the south drive from Stephen Mather Road.

The slate walk from the gravel drive to the staff entry at the east façade of the Main House is of indeterminate origin.

C7. LCA 1 Landscape Structures & Buildings

The Main House historically was and remains the primary building in LCA 1. The appearance of the house generally resembles its character in 1930, at the close of the Stephen T. Mather era, except for the

second-story addition over the west porch which was completed in 1935.² The Little House, situated to the north, was built circa 1963-65 on the foundation of the former caretaker's cottage.

The first barn built by Stephen Mather in 1906 was situated west of the caretaker's cottage, at the opposite end of the connecting pergola. The location of the former barn is indicated by the widened parking area along the drive, where the northern edge of the drive forms a right angle that would have aligned with the southeast corner of the barn. In 1929, this barn was removed and replaced with a newly constructed barn further west (**Figure 4.9a,b**).

A greenhouse was located northwest of the Little House and is not present today.

The wisteria pergola extending west from the Little House and the latticework trellis between the Little House and Main House are not present today (**Figure 4.1a,b, Figure 4.9a,b and 4.10a,b**).

Between the Sunken Garden and the Main House, the stone wellhead and stone retaining walls remain.

West of the Sunken Garden, the chain link fencing that enclosed the former tennis court is not present (**Figure 4.11a,b**).

C8. LCA 1 Small-Scale Features

Many small-scale features in LCA 1 are noncontributing contemporary additions. These include the Free Little Library structure and the interpretive panel on the north side of the entry drive. Wooden benches, such as those in the Sunken Garden and along the driveway, are also noncontributing.

The lantern light posts present today are not the same light fixtures that appear in historic photographs (**Figure 4.6a,b, and 4.9b**).



Figure 4.1a This circa 1909 photograph of Bertha and Jane Mather in a horse-drawn cart in the gravel drive also captures the laticework trellis extending north to the entry portico of the caretaker's cottage, and the pergola extending west from the portico to the barn built in 1906. A gravel path runs along the inside of the trellis from the drive to the portico. Courtesy McPherson-Nickerson family.



Figure 4.1b This 2024 repeat photograph captures the gravel drive in the foreground and the slate path leading north to the Little House. The laticework trellis and wooden pergola are both missing, and the footprint of the historic 1906 barn is now mown lawn. HL 2024.

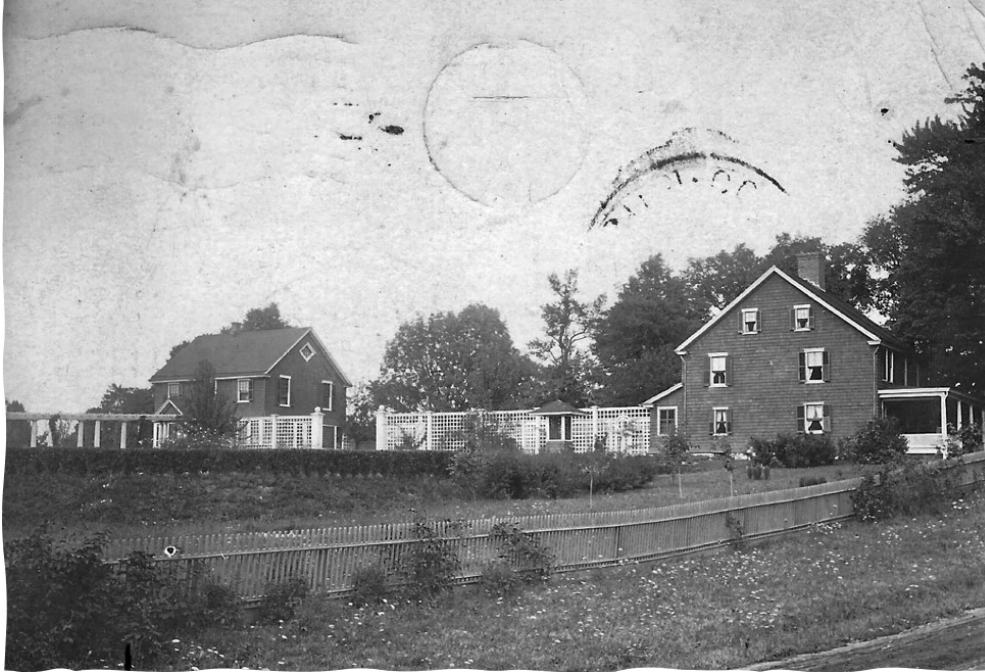


Figure 4.2a This circa 1912 oblique view from Stephen Mather Road captures the linear elements organizing the domestic core of LCA 1. Two parallel latticework trellises span the distance between the Main House and the caretaker's cottage. A white wooden pergola extends west from the cottage. The Main House does not yet have a west porch wing. A young hedge encloses the Sunken Garden. Scattered shrubs and young trees populate the open lawn between the hedge and fence. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 4.2b Repeat view in 2024 shows the same gentle grade rising to the west along Stephen Mather Road toward the Main House. The Little House, built in 1965, is one story shorter than the former caretaker's cottage, and the increased height of the yew hedge around the Sunken Garden partly obscures the view of the smaller structure. Mature shade and flowering trees stand between the Sunken Garden and the road, which is lined sporadically with stones to discourage parking. HL 2024.



Figure 4.3a Circa 1929 view east from the Sunken Garden toward the Main House. Geometric planted beds occupy the center of the garden, divided by narrow gravel paths. The stone wellhead appears in the background. Conical evergreen shrubs line the Main House foundation. A low hedge encircles the perimeter of the garden. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 4.3b 1954 photograph of the view east from the Sunken Garden toward the Main House. A mown lawn panel has replaced the planted beds. A flowering border fills the space between the perimeter yew hedge and a low grassy edge. The stone steps ascending to the well are visible. A weeping birch tree hangs over the northeast corner of the garden. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 4.3c In 2023, a deciduous tree near the west porch wing partly obscures the view of the Main House. The weeping birch on the north side is now missing. The planted beds around the perimeter of the Sunken Garden are wider, resulting in a narrower lawn panel, and lack the defined edges that appear in the 1954 image. HL 2023.

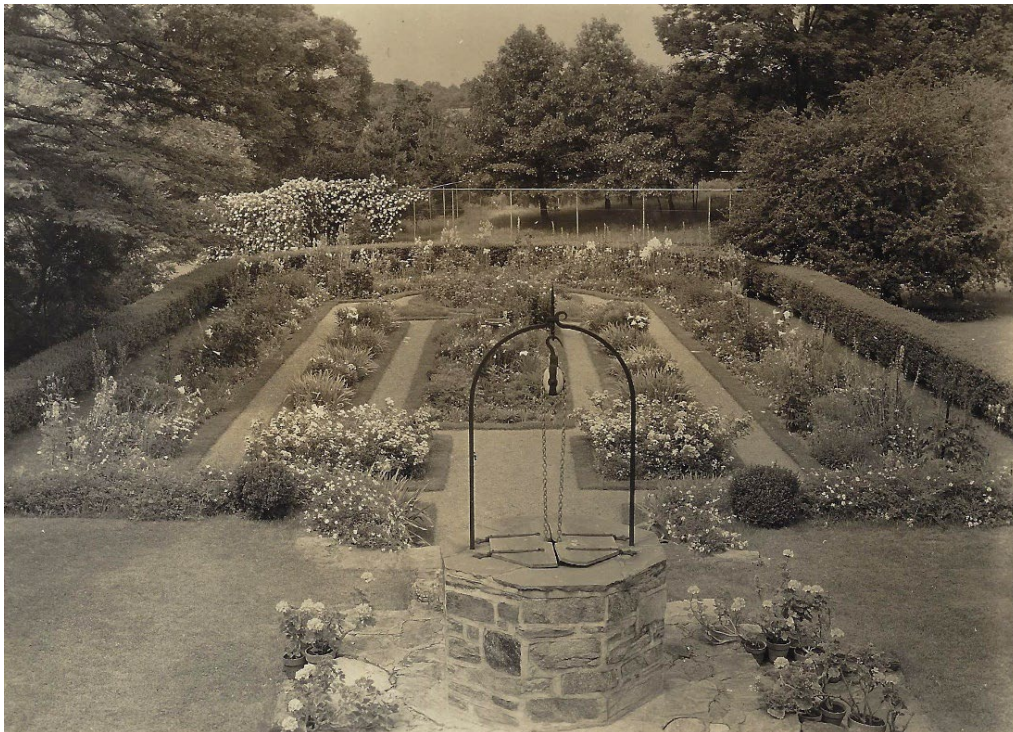


Figure 4.4a Circa 1929 photograph of view west over the Sunken Garden. Geometric beds with ornamental plantings occupy the center of the garden, enclosed by a low, flat-topped hedge around the perimeter. Note the tennis court fencing that appears to the west. Shade and flowering trees screen the north and south sides of the garden, and trees within the tennis court fencing obscure the distant western view. The wellhead is set in a square foundation with steps on each side. Courtesy MHF.

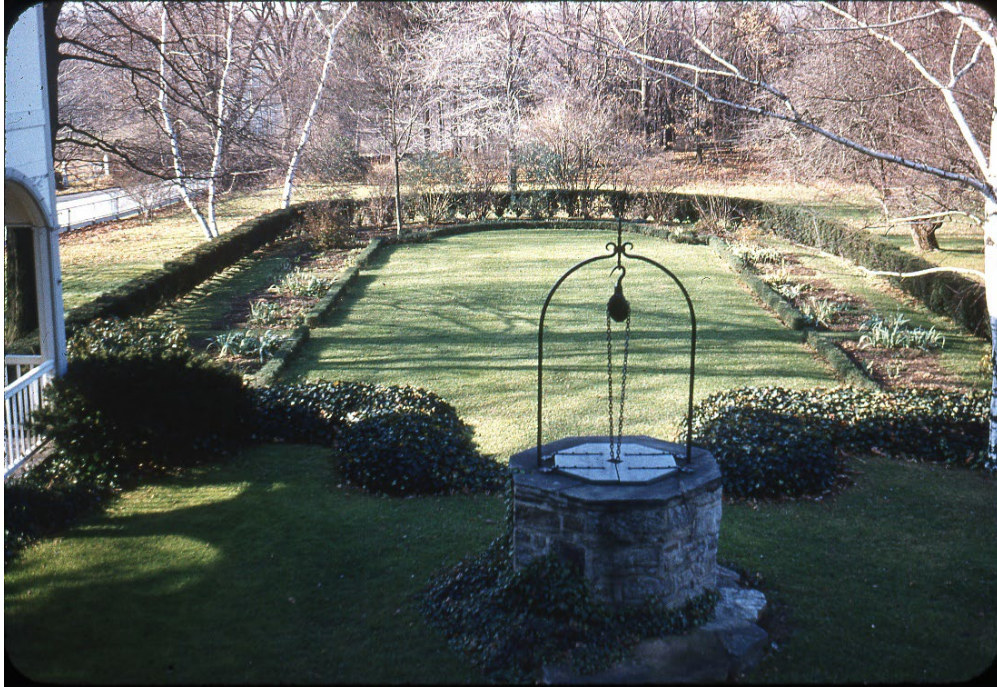


Figure 4.4b 1954 photograph of the western view over the Sunken Garden. A central lawn panel is bordered by beds around the perimeter. In this leaf-off view, Stephen Mather Road is visible to the south. The elevated grade around the wellhead has replaced the former stone risers. Note the dense evergreen groundcover plantings above the stone retaining walls to either side of the steps into the garden. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 4.4c In 2023, the perimeter yew hedge and the domed hedges above the retaining walls have both grown in scale. The 1962 brick terrace is in place around the wellhead. The formerly linear edges of the central lawn panel within the Sunken Garden are now naturalistic, with a smaller area of open lawn.



Figure 4.5a This 1912 photograph shows the western view from the Sunken Garden. On the left side of the image, a stone wall lines Stephen Mather Road. In the background, a shrub- and tree-dotted expanse descends to another stone wall that marks the property boundary with Goodwives River. Beyond the river, the grade rises to a neighboring open field. In the foreground, four individuals stand in the Sunken Garden, including Jane Mather (center) and young Bertha Mather. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 4.5b This view of the Sunken Garden in 2023 exhibits significant change from the 1912 condition, although the open lawn panel and flowering border align with Lilian Egleston's 1938 design. To the west, dense woodland vegetation blocks the view over Goodwives River. HL 2023.



Figure 4.6a Circa 1950 photograph of Jane McPherson standing on the fieldstone walk between the Main House (right) and the caretaker's cottage. The ground plane is surfaced with grass. The latticework trellis between the two houses is no longer present. A lantern light fixture is installed atop a wooden post on the right side of the path. Low shrubs line the foundation of the Main House to the right. Courtesy McPherson-Nickerson family.



Figure 4.6b 2024 image showing the slate walk, no longer fieldstone, leading alongside the brick terrace to the gravel drive. A second, slightly offset slate walk resumes on the north side of the drive and proceeds to the Little House. Rounded yew shrubs line the Main House foundation. Bordering shrub plantings around the brick terrace flank the left side of the walk.



Figure 4.7a 1978 view north from the drive captures the bluestone walk to the Little House front (west) entry. The wisteria pergola is no longer present, nor is the greenhouse. A mown lawn extends north, meeting tall grasses that continue north to a woodland area. The playhouse sits in the left background, obscured by a flowering or fruiting tree in the lawn. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 4.7b Repeat view in 2024 captures the slate walk leading from the curb-edged gravel drive to the front entry of the Little House. The mature sugar maple west of the house is present, and the branches of the Kousa dogwood appear on the right side of the image. The playhouse is visible in the background, as is the neighboring residential property to the north. The patio table and chairs, formerly located on the brick terrace, have been moved to the lawn. HL 2024.



Figure 4.8a This 1951 image captures the bluestone walk from the Main House to the Little House and the wisteria pergola, now constructed with metal poles, extending west from the Little House. Beyond the pergola, a low hedge flanks the greenhouse. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 4.8b In 2024, perimeter beds planted with shrubs enclose the brick terrace along the west façade of the Main House. A linear planting of evergreen shrubs lines the northern border of the bed along the gravel drive. A lamppost stands on the west side of the bluestone path. In the distance, the wisteria arbor, greenhouse, and surrounding hedge have been removed. HL 2024.



Figure 4.9a Circa 1910-11 photograph of the 1906 barn. Bertha Mather and another child stand in the driveway with a pony and dog. The white wooden pergola, laden with wisteria, extends from the caretaker's cottage over the lawn to the barn. The gravel drive curves north and widens to form a parking area against the south façade of the barn. A small doghouse structure is seen near the west corner. Courtesy McPherson-Nickerson family.



Figure 4.9b Repeat view in 2024 shows the open lawn in the former location of the 1906 barn built by Stephen T. Mather, and the Education Center, built in 2020, that replaced Stephen T. Mather's 1929 barn. HL 2024.



Figure 4.10a 1955 photograph of the parking area along the north side of the gravel drive, taken from the lawn panel in the location of the former 1906 barn. A pink dogwood tree stands at the west end of a metal pergola that extends from the Little House (left). The Main House appears in the background. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 4.10b This repeat 2024 photograph shows the continued function of the wide area of the gravel drive for parking today. The wisteria arbor that extended west off of the Little House is not present, although the pink dogwood tree at the west end of the structure remains. HL 2024.



Figure 4.11a Circa 1929 still image capture from a Mather family home video, shows a man in the driveway in the foreground and the fenced tennis court in the background. Mature deciduous trees are present to the west, or right side of the fenced area. What appears to be a young deer stands inside the fence. Courtesy McPherson-Nickerson family.



Figure 4.11b The lifted grading of the tennis lawn remains evident in 2024. Viewed from the gravel drive, the enclosing fencing is missing. Historic trees within and surrounding the tennis fenced area are not present, allowing views to extend south over Stephen Mather Road to Mather Meadows. HL 2024.

D. LCA 2: Cultivated Gardens, Pasture & Barn Surrounds

D1. LCA 2 Land Use

During the Stephen T. Mather era, land use in LCA 2 was characterized by productive gardens and cultivated areas, pasture for livestock, and service functions associated with the barn. The south entry drive from Stephen Mather Road related directly to the barn, providing access to the attached garage and a service route that continued around to the north side of the barn. In the 1930s, a series of vegetable beds extended north of the barn (**Figure 4.12a and Figure 4.13a**). By the 1960s, during the Bertha Mather McPherson era, this cultivation had been scaled back to a flowering border along the east side of the evergreen allée (**Figure 4.13b**). Today, the wooded area north of the Education Center blends with the lawn area to the northeast along an undefined boundary (**Figure 4.13c**).

In 2024, land use in LCA 2 is associated primarily with the Education Center and visitor parking. The scope of programming related to the Education Center extends to the building's surroundings, incorporating areas such as the Outdoor Classroom space situated in a circular clearing to the north. There is no productive land use or linear organization of the landscape north of the Education Center (**Figure 4.12b**).

While the historically productive and agricultural use of LCA 2 fails to be legible today, the area still retains some contemporary service functions. Specifically, the west side of the parking area accommodates a woodshed along with trash and recycling receptacles.

The west portion of LCA 2, formerly an open silvo-pasture, forms a dense woodland today with some native and some invasive species. This area is not presently in active use by the Mather Homestead Foundation. Also in LCA 2 an open lawn appears to be unused and unprogrammed. The playhouse structure, recently renovated in 2023, welcomes children visiting the property for casual use or programs.

D2. LCA 2 Spatial Organization

Although several important organizing elements remain in LCA 2 today, the historically distinct boundaries have lost much of their definition. Stephen Mather Road and the gravel entry drive continue to delineate the south and east boundaries at the southern end of LCA 2. The western boundary is demarcated by the stone wall along the east bank of the Goodwives River, although this boundary is not visible, as it was historically, due to the successive growth of woodland vegetation.

North and northeast of the Education Center, changes in land use, including the loss of cultivated vegetable beds and the orchard north of the current playhouse, have led to less visually distinct LCA boundaries (**Figure 4.14a-c and Figure 4.15a,b**). The present turf lawn seamlessly blends into the groundcover in LCA 1 and the eastern part of LCA 3.

Two parallel linear plantings of evergreen trees provide a remaining structure to LCA 2. The spruce trees along the west side of the entry drive retain their linear organization. Extending north from the parking area and the Education Center, the former allée of evergreens, primarily pine trees, has lost some of its legibility, with several mature trees remaining amid volunteer growth. A circular clearing within this wooded area serves as an outdoor educational space and features benches arranged around the circumference.

Contrasting with the historically open pasture condition, the area to the west of the entry drive is now densely wooded and enclosed. Similarly, the area north of the Education Center exhibits a denser vegetation cover featuring informally arranged and successive deciduous trees, deviating from the cultivated beds that were present during the Stephen T. Mather era through the 1940s.

D3. LCA 2 Views & Vistas

Views in LCA 2, both internal and external, have been altered by changes in vegetation since the Stephen Mather Era. In the past, the historically open pasture to the west allowed for expansive views over the Goodwives River. Today, however, dense woodland vegetation encloses the west side of the entry drive and parking area, restricting and foreshortening the once-open vista (**Figure 4.16a,b**).

Views north from the barn formerly extended over cultivated vegetable beds and row crops. During the Bertha Mather McPherson era, northward views were guided by the double row of evergreen trees aligned to a north-south axis. In the present day, although elements of this axial allée are retained, views to the north are partially confused by volunteer deciduous trees and successive growth around the remaining evergreens.

To the east and northeast, views are unobstructed by the mown turf lawn that surrounds the playhouse and extends further east. Historically, these views would have been contained by the orchard to the north of the present playhouse, although the lawn panel to the south of the playhouse and the former vegetable gardens north of the Little House would have permitted a similar depth of vision.

D4. LCA 2 Topography & Natural Systems

Despite some grading modifications to accommodate the Education Center, visitor parking, and septic tanks, the general topography of LCA 2 maintains a gentle slope downward to the west, leading toward the Goodwives River. Southeast of the playhouse, an area with altered grading signifies the location of the former greenhouse. The Goodwives River persists as the western boundary of the property, with its associated wetland extending eastward into the wooded area of LCA 2.

D5. LCA 2 Vegetation

During the Stephen T. Mather era, much of the vegetation in LCA 2 was related to cultivated crops for household and livestock use. By the 1960s, the cultivated area on the Homestead had been reduced significantly. Today, there is no remaining vegetation that signifies the historic scale of productive land use in LCA 2. The orchard that formerly existed north of the playhouse is no longer present, nor are the row crops and vegetable beds that extended north of the barn. Linear plantings of evergreen trees, including the spruce planting along the west side of the entry drive and the double row of pine trees extending north from the barn, are retained today. In the decades following the property's transfer to Bertha Mather McPherson, productive cultivation continued in LCA 2 with several vegetable garden plots located north of the Little House. The formerly open pasture area descending west from the entry drive to Goodwives River now exhibits successive dense woodland growth.

Plots north of the barn were mostly removed by 1965, although a linear vegetable bed along the east side of the evergreen allée remained in the late 1940s. Foundation plantings around the Education Center do not align with the historic character of the 1929 barn built by Stephen Mather, as such plantings around a working barn could attract rodents. Invasive vegetation is present along the

woodland edge in LCA 2. Recent initiatives to suppress Japanese knotweed are evident in a cleared area on the west side of the mulch path leading north into LCA 3.

D6. LCA 2 Circulation

In 2024, upon entering LCA 2, either from Stephen Mather Road or along the drive through LCA 1, visitors arrive at the Education Center and parking area (**Figure 4.17a,b**). The trajectory of the drive entry from Stephen Mather Road, which continues north along the west side of a rocky knoll before turning east to meet the portion of the drive entering from Brookside Road, aligns with the historic trajectory, although the direction of vehicular traffic may be reversed as the attached three-car garage was likely approached from the east. The service drive that historically continued along the west side of the barn and wrapped around the north façade is not present today (**Figure 4.18a,b**).

From the entry, another arm of the gravel drive continues north, flush with the asphalt-paved parking area against the west façade of the Education Center.

A mulch path leads north from the northwest corner of the gravel drive toward the apiary and wildflower garden in LCA 3. The clearing around the outdoor classroom is also surfaced with mulch.

D7. LCA 2 Landscape Structures & Buildings

The primary building in LCA 2 is the Education Center, constructed in 2020. Situated in the approximate location of the 1929 barn built by Stephen Mather, the new building was shifted slightly eastward to allow for parking on the west side (**Figure 4.19a,b**). The Education Center was designed to resemble an eighteenth-century dairy barn, with a gable roof, sliding barn doors, and red siding. In contrast to the historic barn and garage, which included a fenced yard on its west side, the new Education Center does not have any adjacent enclosed spaces.

Additional historic structures in LCA 2 include a below-grade root cellar and a service pit for vehicle maintenance. Contemporary non-habitable structures include a woodshed and a shed for trash bins. The playhouse, situated northeast of the Education Center, is a feature that dates to the Bertha Mather McPherson era.

D8. LCA 2 Small-Scale Features

Small-scale features present in LCA 2 during the Stephen T. Mather era and the Bertha Mather McPherson era are not known. Features present today include wooden benches, located in the outdoor classroom area and along the mulch path to the apiary, signage, and a dog waste station.

The wooden benches in LCA 2 exhibit three constructions. The first type features finished, backless benches with cross-bracing and four legs. The second type features unfinished, backless benches comprised of boards laid across two logs. The third type is limited to one bench in disrepair along the west side of the mulch path, which features a wood slat seat and back.

Signage in LCA 2 includes a hand-painted wooden sign directing pedestrians toward a mulch path leading north to the apiary in LCA 3, and signs for accessible parking spaces.



Figure 4.12a Circa 1929 still image capture from a Mather family home video of the construction of the new barn. Grace Floy, the aunt of Bertha Mather, walks in the foreground. Row crops extend north in the background. An orchard appears to the east (right). Courtesy McPherson-Nickerson family.



Figure 4.12b This northward view from the north façade of the Education Center shows the east edge of a wooded area, where it transitions to mown lawn around the playhouse. The orderly cultivated plantings seen in the 1929 capture are not present, nor is the historic use legible today. HL 2024.



Figure 4.13a Circa 1947 photograph of Bertha Mather McPherson and her daughter with a horse, standing north of the barn. The allée of evergreens extends north behind them, flanked by a double-row vegetable garden. Several orchard trees are visible to the right on the east side of the adjacent lawn. Courtesy McPherson-Nickerson family.



Figure 4.13b 1953 detail photograph of a linear border planted with tulips and smaller wildflowers along the east side of the evergreen allée extending north of the barn. The evergreens create a dense screen to the west, offering a shaded contrast to the open and sunny mown lawn to the east. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 4.13c The defined edge of the evergreen allée is missing in 2024. Two pine trees appear in the background to the northwest, and a tall evergreen shrub is present to the north. The ground plane in the wooded area, covered with leaf litter, blends with the lawn to the east. There are no linear plantings to define this boundary. HL 2024.



Figure 4.14a 1953 photograph of the playhouse at the south end of the orchard, situated between two apple trees. A mown lawn panel extends through the foreground, south of the playhouse, and continues north in the background. One of the evergreen trees in the allée north of the barn appears on the left side of the image. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 4.14b Circa 1970-80 image of the playhouse. A low shrub mass flanks the west side of the structure, and a lone ash tree is present further north in the surrounding field. There is no differentiation between the groundcover in the foreground and in the northern portion of the property beyond. Tree branches frame the view overhead. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 4.14c Repeat view in 2024 shows the twin ash tree north of the playhouse is retained. The northward view over the meadow is foreshortened by the neighboring house immediately north. A second residential property is visible to the northwest behind the playhouse. The foreground is open mown lawn. HL 2024.



Figure 4.15a Circa 1963 photograph of the playhouse (left) and greenhouse (right). An open expanse of rough and patchy turf covers the foreground. Taller grass is seen in the background, to the north. Two trees are present, one near each of the respective structures. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 4.15b 2024 photograph captures a raised bed southwest of the playhouse and open lawn through the former location of the greenhouse in LCA 1. The ash tree north of the playhouse is still present, although no other trees are present in the area. HL 2024.



Figure 4.16a Circa 1929 still image capture from a Mather family home video. The newly constructed foundation of the barn appears in the midground of the image. A small outbuilding, apparently lifted from its foundation, is seen to the right. A vehicle on the left side of the image indicates the entry drive. Beyond the truck, a line of trees and shrubs marks the west edge of the drive. Courtesy McPherson-Nickerson family.



Figure 4.16b The west-facing view beyond the Education Center in 2023 is foreshortened by the dense vegetation on the west side of the parking area. The gravel drive entry from Stephen Mather Road is in approximately the same location as indicated in the historic image. HL 2023.



Figure 4.17a 1982 photograph of the barn built in 1929 as seen from the drive entrance on Stephen Mather Road. To the east, the topography rises to a natural knoll. The drive wraps around the north side of this knoll to arrive at the three-car garage attached to the barn. Another arm of the drive continues north. A wooden fence with vertical slats, painted red, encloses an area on the west side. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 4.17b The location of the 2020 Education Center is shifted slightly eastward, compared with the historic 1929 barn, to accommodate parking on the west side. Deciduous trees line the east side of the drive on the sloping grade that ascends to the knoll in LCA 1. Several pine trees appear to the north, indicating the location of the historic evergreen allée. A wooden split-rail fence lines the west side of the drive. HL 2023.



Figure 4.18a This circa 1929 still image capture shows the northwest view from the same vantage as the previous figure. A service drive divides the vicinity of the barn from the cultivated vegetable beds and row crops to the north (right). The same outbuilding seen in the previous figure appears at the left side of the image. Further west, beyond the cultivated area, a dense shrub edge and mature deciduous trees are present. Courtesy McPherson-Nickerson family.



Figure 4.18b The landscape north and northwest of the Education Center in 2024 features a wooded area with a circular clearing for the outdoor classroom space. To the east (right), a raised bed is the only feature that indicates the historically productive land use. The drive along the north side of the barn, now the Education Center, is not present. HL 2024.



Figure 4.19a 1974 photograph of Bertha Mather McPherson standing beside the 1929 barn. The gravel drive is flush with the three-car garage. Two large maple trees are present on the north side of the barn. To the east, several spruce trees appear over the roofline of the barn. The foreground features mown turf. Courtesy MHF.



Figure 4.19b In 2024, the Education Center is present in the approximate location of the 1929 barn. The gravel drive does not extend up to the foundation of the structure; a concrete walk wraps around the perimeter, providing access to the east façade entry. The maple trees north of the historic barn are not present. Mown lawn extends north alongside a wooded area to the northwest. HL 2024.

E. LCA 3: Large-Scale Crop Production & Woodlands

E1. LCA 3 Land Use

During the Stephen T. Mather era, from 1906 to 1930, land use in LCA 3 was related to large-scale crop production, including hay and possibly other crops such as flax. The western portion of LCA 3 was left as woodland (**Figure 4.20a,b**). In the decades following the property's transfer to Bertha Mather McPherson, productive land use persisted in LCA 3 (**Figure 4.21a,b**). Family photographs from the late 1970s show that these northern fields were still planted with hay during this period.

In 2024, the western third of LCA 3 is retained as a woodland edge, although it has encroached slightly on the meadow that occupies the adjacent central third. Both of these sections of LCA 3 are owned and managed by the Darien Land Trust.

The eastern third of LCA 3 is under the ownership of the Mather Homestead Foundation and is maintained as mown lawn. This portion is occasionally used for visitor parking during large events.

E2. LCA 3 Spatial Organization

The southern boundary of LCA 3 was historically defined by the boundaries of cultivated fields dedicated to large-scale crop production. This definition is altered today. The boundaries of the parcel owned by the Darien Land Trust and maintained as meadow do not align with the historic extent of the hayfields. Additionally, the meadow area extends beyond the Land Trust's property line and into the land owned by the Mather Homestead Foundation. The southeast corner of the meadow extends into LCA 2.

The western boundary of LCA 3 was and continues to be defined by the Goodwives River. Today, the Darien Land Trust's holdings extend to the river's edge. Similarly, the eastern boundary of LCA 3 was and continues to be defined by Brookside Road. A densely wooded edge encloses the stone wall that marks the property line.

The north boundary of LCA 3 is defined by the present property boundaries, including the east parcel owned by the Mather Homestead Foundation and the west parcel managed by the Darien Land Trust. This boundary, which follows the trajectory of the shared private driveway and the southern property line of abutting residential developments, does not correspond to any historical precedent.

Much like its historic character, LCA 3 is presently defined by a distinct contrast between the dense woodland on the west side and the sunlit and open meadow on the east. The apiary and wildflower garden, situated in a small clearing on the west side of the meadow area, does not detract from this contrasting character.

E3. LCA 3 Views & Vistas

Northward views from LCA 3 are foreshortened by neighboring residential properties and by the shared private driveway to the northeast. Despite this constraint, the northwest views over tall grasses to a dense woodland edge within LCA 3 are closely aligned with the historic condition (**Figure 4.20a,b**).

E4. LCA 3 Natural Systems & Topography

The topography of LCA 3 is generally characterized by a gentle downward slope to the west. This is consistent with the historic topography of the area, which was adequately level for crop production.

Contemporary grading alterations are limited to modifications related to the shared driveway access for residential properties to the north. This driveway passes over a small tributary of the Goodwives River.

E5. LCA 3 Vegetation

The historic composition of vegetation in LCA 3 included hayfields and other crops, woodland to the west, and a wooded edge to the east. In 2024, this overall composition is partly retained. Dense woodland occupies the western portion of LCA 3. The wooded edge to the east is also retained.

Although hay is no longer cultivated on the property, the existing meadow maintains a similar visual character. The turf lawn area in the east portion of LCA 3, while not contributing to this particular character, does enable an unobstructed depth of vision similar to that observed in the historic landscape.

E6. LCA 3 Circulation

Pedestrian and vehicular circulation in LCA 3 was notably limited historically. Any existing paths were likely utilitarian and designed for pedestrian access to the outer fields, with vehicular drives being unnecessary as horse-drawn plows or automotive tractors could access the fields directly.

Today, circulation in LCA 3 remains relatively minimal. A mulch path enters from LCA 2, approaching from the south and continuing north to wrap around a hexagonal wildflower garden bed. A strip of mown grass encloses the perimeter of the mulched area, creating a visual separation between the clearing and the meadow beyond. Other than this path, there is no additional defined circulation in LCA 3.

E7. LCA 3 Landscape Structures & Buildings

In the Stephen T. Mather era, LCA 3 was characterized by few structures, with no buildings present in the area. This character is retained today, with the only structures present in LCA 3 being a historic stone wall along Brookside Road and a contemporary split rail fence along the shared residential driveway to the north.

E8. LCA 3 Small-Scale Features

Small-scale structures in LCA 3 historically included support stakes for bean crops and likely other agriculturally related items. Today, small-scale features include two beehives, a hexagonal planted bed with wooden edges, and two backless wooden benches positioned beside the wildflower garden bed. While there are no agricultural small-scale features present, the beehives do provide a productive function that aligns with the historic character.



Figure 4.20a Undated circa 1910 photograph of Stephen T. Mather and young Bertha Mather, sitting atop a hay wagon. Another man, likely the caretaker, stands beside the horse pulling the wagon. The hayfields extend into the background to a dense woodland edge. Courtesy McPherson-Nickerson family.



Figure 4.20b This 2024 photograph of the meadow area in the northwest corner of the property, a parcel owned and managed by the Darien Land Trust, shows the remaining portion of the landscape that reflects the historic character of LCA 3. The view over the mown meadow is foreshortened by the residential property to the northwest, visible beyond the tree line. Two beehives are situated near the wildflower garden (left). HL 2024.



Figure 4.21a Circa 1944-45 photograph of Stephen Mather McPherson riding a horse that is pulling a plow. A man follows behind and steers the plow. Near the far edge of the cultivated plot, a line of branches stuck in the ground indicates the growing of beans or other legumes. In the background, the cultivated land gives way to lawn bordered by a stone wall. Courtesy McPherson-Nickerson family.



Figure 4.21b Repeat view in 2024 shows the meadow parcel in the foreground, giving way to mown turf lawn that extends northeast to the current property line. A wooden split rail fence lines the south side of the private shared driveway. HL 2024.

F. Landscape Significance & Integrity

F1. National Historic Landmark, National Register of Historic Places & Landscape Significance

The Mather Homestead is a National Historic Landmark (NHL), designated on November 27, 1963.³ A National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination was prepared that same year, and the property was inscribed in the List by the Keeper on October 15, 1966.⁴ An amended listing dates to November 24, 1978.⁵ This dual designation is notable; out of the 98,440 listings on the National Register of Historic Places in 2024, only 2,655 are also designated as National Historic Landmarks. This amounts to 2.69% of NRHP listings that qualify as NHLs.⁶ The property is also included in historic listings at the local level in Darien and at the Connecticut state level.⁷ The National Register nomination identifies the national significance of the site due to its association with Stephen Tyng Mather, a nationally important person, and defines a period of significance between 1906 and 1930. Areas of significance cited are conservation and politics or government. The Mather Homestead is significant under National Register Criterion B, which recognizes heritage resources that are “associated with the lives of persons significant in our past,” in this case Stephen Tyng Mather and his pivotal role as the US Assistant Secretary of the Interior from 1915 to 1929.⁸ His contributions, particularly in creating and shaping the National Park System, underscore the property's association with a nationally significant figure. The nomination focuses on the Main House as a representative example of a Connecticut farmhouse from Mather's era, highlighting its architectural and historical significance. Absent is the long ownership of the property within the Mather family. The landscape of the property remains unmentioned, and the details of that historic landscape fail to contribute to the significance of the property in either the NHL or NR nominations.

The broader context of the property, including the larger landscape and its significance as a home and farm for successive generations of the Mather family, does embody historic values despite inadequate articulation in these nominations. The property's enduring importance lies in its role as a familial residence in Darien over many decades. This multi-generational stewardship by the same family, spanning the early days of the American republic and Revolutionary War up to the property's donation to the Mather Homestead Foundation, signifies successive layers of historical significance.

Beyond its association with Stephen Mather, the Mather Homestead expresses a rich heritage that spans from pre-contact Indigenous days to the present, encapsulating the broader history of Darien. The property serves as a testament to the diverse stories embedded in its grounds, which can be interpreted for the learning and enjoyment of Darien residents and visitors alike.

F2. Introduction to Landscape Integrity

The homestead landscape expresses the cumulative influence of Mather family stewardship, rather than solely linked to Stephen Tyng Mather and his leadership in establishing the National Park Service. Following the Deacon Joseph Mather and Sarah Scott establishment the Homestead in 1778, the property served as the residence for family generations prior to its transfer to Stephen Tyng Mather in 1905. From 1906 to 1930, the Mather Homestead served as Stephen Mather's summer residence, accompanied by his wife, Jane Thacker Floy Mather, and their daughter, Bertha Floy Mather. The landscape of the property supported a rural daily life, offering broad views of the open pasture lands to the south, the woodland to the west, and importantly, the productive crop fields and vegetable gardens to the north. The Mather Pond was dammed and shaped by Stephen Mather. In 1930 after Stephen Tyng Mather's death, the Homestead was passed to his daughter, Bertha Mather McPherson. As an architect,

Bertha added elements and made changes contributing to the design and character of the property, until her passing in 1993. This analysis of integrity broadens scope to encompass the enduring and multi-generational influence of the Mather family on this cultural landscape.

Integrity is the degree to which a property conveys its historic significance, retains its historic character and qualities, and remains recognizable and legible. To be listed in the NR, a property must be significant under one of four criteria and must retain historic integrity. In this case, the Mather Homestead significance is for criterion B: Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, focusing on a single period. However, the Homestead landscape evolved through generations over 239 years and this integrity discussion also assesses that historic evolved landscape.

The NR defines seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.⁹ Each aspect is assessed using a holistic view of the property's contributing features to determine how historic landscape character continues to be expressed. Drawing on an understanding of the historical evolution and significance of the Mather Homestead and the preceding analysis of continuity and change, this section assesses extant historic contributing features to evaluate the degree to which the Mather Homestead cultural landscape retains integrity. A ranking of high, moderate, or low integrity is noted for the existing landscape; these rankings reflect the level of continuity and change for the factors that impact each aspect of integrity. The Main House is the locus of the property from which various features extend and various landscape character areas radiate outwards.

F3. Integrity of Location

Location describes the place where a historic property was constructed. The Mather Homestead remains in the location where Deacon Joseph Mather and Sarah Scott established their home and self-sufficient lifestyle in 1778. The Homestead is situated at the intersection of Brookside Road and Stephen Mather Road, an area colloquially known as Darien's Four Corners, in the northeast corner of the town near the border with New Canaan and Norwalk. The property sits on relatively level terrain that slopes gently westward to the Goodwives River. The current property boundaries reflect the roughly 11 remaining acres under the combined ownership of the Mather Homestead Foundation and the Darien Land Trust. These boundaries encompass the historically important landscape character and features, to include the Sunken Garden and woodlands to the west, and the majority of former fields to the north and on the south side of Stephen Mather Road. For these reasons, the Mather Homestead retains a high level of integrity of location in 2024.

F4. Integrity of Design

Design is the combination of elements that create the space, form, shape, structure, scale, and style of a property over time. The design of a historic property reflects the functions, technologies, and aesthetics of its period of significance. For the Mather Homestead property, Bertha Mather McPherson's design influence continued into the 1990s. The overall layout of the landscape is retained, with the Main House and Little House anchoring the domestic landscape at the southeast corner of the property, and service elements are generally situated to the west near the Education Center. The open meadow and lawn extending to the north contribute to the evolved character of the property. However, the passage of time marked the loss of certain spatial elements, including the wisteria pergola, grape arbor, and latticework trellis in the domestic core. Additionally, the former division of fields and productive gardens in the northern part of the property is no longer evident. The design of particular features, such as the Sunken

Garden, exhibit changes since Stephen T. Mather's era yet remain consistent with alterations made during Bertha Mather McPherson's ownership. Due to these elements of change among broader continuity, the Mather Homestead landscape retains a moderate degree of integrity of design today.

F5. Integrity of Setting

Setting describes the physical environment of a historic property. As opposed to location, which refers to a specific geographic place, setting refers to the character of the place in relationship to its surroundings. The land around the Mather Homestead exhibits varying degrees of change and evolution. The former fields to the north were subdivided and sold by the McPherson family in 2007, leading to the development of three residential properties on the land by 2013. These new structures now dominate the northward views from the Homestead, marking a notable shift in the visual environment. Conversely, to the east, the neighboring Three Gates Lot property, designed by Bertha Mather McPherson and built in 1931, has retained much of its original character. On the south side of Stephen Mather Road, preserved meadow parcels owned by the Darien Land Trust remain undeveloped, as does the woodland area to the west of the Homestead, helping to uphold the rural character of the Homestead's surroundings. While the historic access to Mathers Pond is now owned by the Darien Land Trust and integrated in the meadow parcel, the visual connection is lost due to the growth of obscuring vegetation. As a result of these altered contextual surroundings, the Mather Homestead has a moderate degree of integrity of setting today.

F6. Integrity of Materials

The materials of a property include physical elements that were used, combined, or deposited in a particular pattern within the landscape during the period of significance. At the Mather Homestead, many features of the original layout are retained today, including structures and elements of hardscape. Despite several iterative additions and renovations, the Main House demonstrates continuity with the original historic materials, featuring a fieldstone foundation and clapboard siding. The Little House, which replaced the former caretaker's cottage in 1965, maintains a construction reminiscent of the original structure, featuring white clapboard siding. Smaller structures, such as the playhouse and picket fence, also demonstrate material continuity. The Education Center, built in 2020, was designed to reflect the character of the historic barn that it replaced, which was built in 1929 by Stephen T. Mather and was painted red by 1970 under Bertha Mather McPherson's direction. The new Education Center, with its red clapboard siding and barnlike structure, thus evokes the character of the historic barn as evolved with the influence of Bertha Mather McPherson's direction.

The gravel driveway, in both material and trajectory, aligns with the historic condition. Changes in circulation paving and details, notably the brick terrace and slate walks, primarily reflect the design choices made by Bertha Mather McPherson. Exceptions include the asphalt-paved parking area in LCA 2 and the mulch path leading north to the apiary in LCA 3.

The greatest degree of change in materials on the Mather Homestead property is observed in vegetation, evident in the loss of cultivated land, including vegetable gardens and hayfields, as well as the removal of ornamental features like the wisteria pergola. Despite these alterations, elements of continuity persist, notably in the form of remaining mature deciduous trees lining Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads as well as the evergreen allée and linear spruce planting in LCA 2. The workmanship of the formal vegetation features in the Sunken Garden, including the yew hedge and the

perimeter beds, displays continuity with the 1938 design by landscape architect Lilian Egleston; however, the organization, plantings, and materials in Walter Burley Griffin's design are not fully present in the landscape today. Despite these changes, the Mather Homestead retains a high degree of integrity of materials today.

F7. Integrity of Workmanship

Workmanship is the physical evidence of historic crafts, labor, and construction skills in shaping a landscape or site. For the Mather Homestead landscape, historic craft and construction included features such as the fieldstone retaining walls and white-painted wooden picket fence; the configuration of productive gardens, orchard, and crop fields; structures such as the wisteria pergola and latticework trellis; non-habitable buildings like the barn and greenhouse; and paving patterns in the brick terrace construction. Of these features, only the stone walls, picket fence, and brick terrace remain. Elements of artificial grading exhibit historic workmanship, observed at the western end of the Sunken Garden and in the former locations of the tennis court and greenhouse. Buildings on the property also display historic craft and construction. The Main House demonstrates a high integrity of workmanship as an example of eighteenth-century New England vernacular farmhouse construction. The Little House, on the other hand, displays Bertha Mather McPherson's ability to integrate new construction with the property's historic architectural character through intentional design. Although the remaining elements of workmanship reflect the combined works and aesthetic choices of builders and artisans throughout the Mather family's ownership, the loss of numerous physical features has significantly impacted the property's integrity of workmanship. Overall, the Mather Homestead cultural landscape retains a moderate level of integrity of workmanship today.

F8. Integrity of Feeling

The feeling of a historic property is the combined effect of physical features that express the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period. During the Stephen Tyng Mather era and throughout Bertha Mather McPherson's direction of the property, the feeling of the landscape was likely influenced most strongly by the active domestic core and productive land use in LCA 2 and LCA 3.

Integrity of feeling is diminished by the deterioration or removal of historic features, including the hayfields, vegetable gardens, and fruit orchard; non-habitable structures such as the greenhouse and barn; and other elements like the wisteria pergola and tennis court fencing. The addition of the asphalt parking area and signage related to the property's function as a house museum also reduces the integrity of feeling. Although the Main House and the Little House remain in place, the transition of the Mather Homestead into a publicly accessible landscape has introduced changes that compromise the historic feeling of a residential and self-sufficient property. As a cultural landscape, the Mather Homestead retains a low level of integrity of feeling today.

F9. Integrity of Association

Association describes the link between a historic property and an important person or event that makes it historically valued. The Mather Homestead landscape is connected to Stephen Tyng Mather and his role as U.S. Assistant Secretary of the Interior and founding director of the National Park Service (1915-29) during his time residing at the property.

The extent to which the current landscape is linked to Stephen T. Mather and the Mather family through the representation of its historic characteristics is severely diminished. Association is largely related to the functional and productive landscape that the Mather family created over time. While the property remains closely associated with the Mather family, their activities in the landscape are not clearly legible today. Overall, the Mather Homestead landscape retains a moderate level of integrity of association.

F10. Summary of Integrity

The Mather Homestead cultural landscape has undergone various changes from its as-built character in 1930 to its current state, influenced by multiple factors such as changes in ownership, property function, and land use. Notably, many of these changes occurred during the period when Bertha Mather McPherson owned the property. Relatively fewer changes have occurred since the property transitioned to the stewardship of the Mather Homestead Foundation in 2017. Using the analysis of contributing landscape features, each of the seven aspects of integrity was assessed to determine how well the landscape expressed the character as evolved through generations of family ownership to the end of Bertha Mather McPherson's direction in 1993. This integrity assessment is summarized as follows.

■ Location	High
■ Design	Moderate
■ Setting	Moderate
■ Materials	High
■ Workmanship	Moderate
■ Feeling	Low
■ Association	Moderate

Overall, the Mather Homestead landscape retains a moderate degree of integrity, reflecting the evolved landscape through the Bertha Mather McPherson era.

G. Landscape Analysis Conclusion

In summary, the existing landscape expresses evolution under Mather family ownership rather than strict continuity with the historic period as defined in the National Register nomination from 1905 to 1929. Due to the moderate degree of change since the end of Bertha Mather McPherson's influence on the landscape and the retention of features from various historic periods, the cultural landscape of this National Historic Landmark demonstrates generally moderate levels of integrity. The abundant multi-generational stories, however, are not sufficiently interpreted for visitors. The property does not convey the significance of the property related to self-sufficient living across generations within the Mather family. These conditions pose opportunities to augment the future integrity of this significant landscape. Understanding the analysis of the Mather Homestead over time helps to determine the approach and recommendations for the property discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 Endnotes

-
- ¹ G. Arthur Janssen, “Mather Plaques – A History,” National Park Service History eLibrary, August 25, 2016, with Jan. 25, 2019 and Mar. 25, 2020 revisions, <http://npshistory.com/publications/mather-plaques/index.htm>; and Mather Homestead (@matherhomestead), “Thanks Joe for opening up the 89 pound package which includes our very own bronze plaque. There are more than 60 of these plaques in National Parks. They pay...” Facebook, August 22, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/matherhomesteadfoundation/photos/a.1942823075737135/5811447788874625/?type=3>.
- ² Unknown photographer, “Showing addition of room over porch, built in 1935,” 1953, Bertha Mather McPherson’s album with history of the Main House, Mather Homestead Foundation.
- ³ Blanche Higgins Schroer and S. Sydney Bradford, “Stephen T. Mather House (The Mather Homestead) National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form,” prepared 1963, listed Nov. 24, 1978; “List of NHLs by State,” National Historic Landmarks, National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalhistoriclandmarks/list-of-nhls-by-state.htm#onthisPage-55>; and “National Register Database and Research,” National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm>.
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- ⁵ Blanche Higgins Schroer and S. Sydney Bradford, “Stephen T. Mather House (The Mather Homestead) National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form,” prepared 1963, listed Nov. 24, 1978.
- ⁶ Table of listed properties, National Register Database and Research, National Register of Historic Places, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm>, accessed 17 Jan. 2024.
- ⁷ “Mather, Stephen Tyng House,” ConnCRIS Public Resource Viewer, Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office, <https://ctmaps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ddd39a67a714449d8ad60467d10fcedd>.
- ⁸ US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1997), 12-24.
- ⁹ US Department of the Interior, National Register Bulletin 15, 44-45.

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1934



1965



MATHER HOMESTEAD CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

Darien, Connecticut

Client

Mather Homestead

19 Stephen Mather Road, Darien Connecticut 06820

Team

Heritage Landscapes LLC

Preservation Landscape Architects & Planners

Charlotte, VT | Norwalk, CT
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Drawing Title:

**L9 Aerial
Comparison
1934 & 1965**

Date:

January 2024



1990



2017



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**L10 Aerial
Comparison
1990 & 2017**

Date:

January 2024

Mather Homestead ♦ Cultural Landscape Report

5 ♦ Landscape Treatment



A. Landscape Treatment Introduction

The Mather Homestead property is inscribed as a National Historic Landmark and is listed on both Darien and Connecticut historic property inventories. It is useful to note that this property is historically significant for conservation and government due to Stephen Tyng Mather's nationally important work as U.S. Assistant Secretary of the Interior and founding director of the National Park Service from 1915 to 1929.¹ This association with Stephen T. Mather elevates the property to national importance, as it relates to a significant person who contributed to the nation's history. The National Register nomination focuses primarily on the Main House as a typical eighteenth-century Connecticut farmhouse with additions and alterations through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The documentation fails to address the larger property or the landscape and therefore its significance as a seasonal residence for Stephen Mather and a home for the generations of the Mather family.

The Mather Homestead cultural landscape is a heritage asset for this property. The proposed treatment approach is based in preservation and considers adaptations for current and future needs. This illustrated narrative explores the range of approaches outlined in federal guidance, selects a recommended preservation treatment, and suggests two alternatives to compatibly address current and future needs with the historic documentation and existing property. The overall intent is to respect the Mather Homestead landscape as evolved, protect the landscape heritage, respectfully adapt to public use for learning and experience, and effectively sustain this landscape into the future.

B. Landscape Preservation Treatment Concepts & Selection

The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* defines four approaches to the treatment of cultural landscapes:

Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction. These four treatments propose varying degrees of intervention and activity within a landscape. It is important to note that these alternative treatments are not mutually exclusive. Although an overarching approach can be determined, certain landscape areas or features may warrant a focused intervention that varies from the overall treatment. The four treatment approaches are defined as follows:

Preservation begins the process of protection and stabilization. It is the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses on the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features to match the original, rather than extensive replacement and new construction.

Preservation is the most modest intervention approach, in which stabilization and repair are emphasized. It is an appropriate stewardship and sustainability choice when many original elements are intact, interpretive goals can be met within the existing conditions, and/or when financial resources or staffing are limited. With the goals of conserving, maintaining, and repairing extant historic fabric, Preservation is the treatment approach that underlies the other three more intensive preservation treatments.

Preservation treatment as a single approach is insufficient to meet the overall desire to holistically integrate the Mather Homestead cultural landscape with the current functions and uses, particularly at peak visitor capacity. Preservation serves as an initial level intervention that can protect and stabilize the contributing features that remain within the landscape, including stone walls, pavements, and original plantings. Preservation frequently combines with and supports a more intensive treatment approach.

Restoration is the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and the reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period.

A Restoration treatment approach seeks to first preserve, through stabilization and repair, all historic fabric remaining from the period of significance, and then to reinstate lost character or renew degraded materials and features. Restoration is dependent on high levels of documentation to undertake an intervention with limited speculation. Restoration treatment may also require the removal of contemporary features. While applying a Restoration approach, functional issues such as visitor, safety, and service access are accommodated as they were historically, or in the least conspicuous manner possible. The Mather Homestead property, as evolved within the same family, does not lend itself to either an overall restoration to a specific time or the restoration of missing elements in detail, such as the pergola and grape arbor. The Mather Homestead's landscape features and uses have demonstrated both continuity and change throughout its evolution from a family property to a public historic property welcoming the community.

Reconstruction is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period and in its historic location. Reconstruction requires detailed documentation to construct an exact replica of a contributing landscape feature with limited speculation. The selection of a specific date for a Reconstruction approach is not applicable to this evolved Mather Homestead landscape.

There are missing features, particularly the productive vegetable gardens, hayfields, and the pergola and grape arbor. While documentation for these features exists, including historic images and a 1909 Walter Burley Griffin plan showing the arbor, the explicit details of these absent features are not thoroughly known. Moreover, inserting a historical feature into a landscape that has evolved beyond the time when that feature originally existed is generally discouraged. In fact, the creation of an anachronistic landscape, characterized by the inclusion of contributing features that did not historically coexist, is explicitly to be avoided in applying a preservation treatment. Reconstruction is not selected for the Mather Homestead landscape.

Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical and cultural values. Rehabilitation incorporates the contemporary uses, needs and issues of maintainability and sustainability while respecting the extant historic landscape and its remaining character-defining features. The emphasis in a Rehabilitation treatment is harmony and compatibility with the historic cultural and natural resources of the landscape to safeguard remaining components and historic character while enhancing and stabilizing these assets. A Rehabilitation philosophy, combining respect for historic resources with the integration of contemporary uses, maintenance, code compliance, security, and other relevant concerns, is frequently applied to landscapes that have changed use, as here with a shift from private estate to public property.

Rehabilitation is the ideal approach to consistently apply to the Mather Homestead cultural landscape. The recommended landscape treatment is Rehabilitation underpinned by respectful Preservation of the character and features of the landscape that remains. This approach recognizes the historic evolution of the Mather Homestead landscape, taking into account current conditions and future directions. It considers a multitude of factors, including land use, current needs, and programming, while also addressing future sustainability.

C. Landscape Use and Appearance Considerations

At the outset of this cultural landscape report and planning process, the Mather Homestead Foundation provided a list of issues to be addressed. An overarching objective is to retain the association with the Mather family and maintain the character of a family home while also providing a welcoming, informative, and well-designed visitor experience. The objective encompasses both the preservation of existing features that contribute to this ambiance and the integration of new aspects that align compatibly with the site's historical character. This involves maintaining the open and spacious feel of the landscape, with a visual connection to green fields and woodlands. Aspects of the landscape that relate to function, such as trash and recycling management, need to be integrated by design. The narrative that follows presents the range of issues, primarily focused on visitor-related functions and the quality of the visitor experience while addressing the need to accommodate peak events, ensure the safety of visitors, and to bring forward a maintainable, sustainable landscape.

Another overall objective is to optimize the arrival experience and address practical on-site visitor needs. This encompasses addressing challenges such as current visitor entry confusion and potential conflicts arising from two entry points. The property only offers five parking spaces today. Annual event capacity limits are established by a zoning agreement. Darien Planning and Zoning guidelines allow for an

unlimited number of events with fewer than thirty attendees; up to ten annual events with a capacity of 31 to 70 people; and a maximum of five annual events with a capacity of 71 to 150 people.

To meet the requirements for daily staff and visitor parking, typically around ten cars, and to accommodate the smaller annual events outlined above requires a total parking capacity of approximately 35 spaces. This figure includes the existing five spaces and an additional 30 new spaces. For the five annual events that can host between 71 and 150 attendees, an organized lawn parking solution can accommodate about 100 cars, supplementing the 35 paved spaces. In addition, current events and programming require spaces for gathering. Recognizing that some events are presently hosted on the elevated tennis lawn, a paved terrace adjacent to the north façade of the Education Center could be well integrated. This approach aims to optimize the site's functionality, ensuring that the landscape can cater to varying event sizes while providing a welcoming, fully functional experience for all visitors.

The formalization and location of parking areas can also address the challenges of providing clear entry points and an intuitive arrival sequence for visitors unfamiliar with the Mather Homestead. Signage may be used to direct visitors to orientation points or set them on a route for a self-guided tour. Currently, both entries on Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads are always open without gates for controlling site closure. Entry and exit movements can be unsafe due to lack of visitor familiarity, traffic on Stephen Mather Road and limited sight lines when turning west. Accommodation of increased parking requires full compliance with Darien stormwater management and wetlands regulations.

Once visitors exit their vehicles, pedestrian safety is an issue due to potential conflicts with cars. Improvements to both pedestrian and vehicle routes, along with strategic site design clues, can effectively mitigate these points of conflict. In addition, existing gradients on the property pose challenges for universal access. The permissible grades for accessibility when navigating the property without handrails are a maximum of 5% running pitch and a 2% cross slope. Accessible surfaces must be firm and stable for individuals walking on foot or using mobility aids, and they should not be loose or slippery when wet. Paths in the core area of the property can be augmented to ensure that they are firm and accessible within the required grades. Woodland and field routes may conform to U.S. Forest Service recreation guidance, which allows firm but not paved surfaces and permits increased grades as long as trail maps indicating location and difficulty levels are provided in advance. A site map with trails may be positioned at the visitor parking area.

A well-integrated path and trail system will serve to open the property more broadly to visitors and reinforce a diverse learning experience for repeat visitors. Paths and trails providing broader access to the property may also bring visitors into adjacent Darien conservation lands, with public access and trail building subject to agreement between the Darien Land Trust and Mather Homestead Foundation.

The plants within the Mather Homestead landscape and in the adjacent woodlands must maintain a healthy and thriving appearance. Historic trees require regular inspection and remedial care for any issues identified. When historic trees are lost, preservation guidance indicates prioritizing replacement in-kind and in-location. If a given tree species is vulnerable to pests and disease, an alternative selection should match the historic texture, scale and form. When new trees are planted for the coming generations, the removal of large trees offers an opportunity to collaborate with local wood crafters to

repurpose the wood into objects for on-site use, volunteer mementos, or sale. Crafting a slice from an old tree trunk, often referred to as a tree cookie, involves sanding and finishing to expose the tree's growth rings. A tree cookie with dated labels is a compelling exhibit feature. For example, if the tree dates back 200 years or more, significant early Mather family events can be marked on the corresponding growth rings.

The placement of decorative shrubs and maintenance of the Sunken Garden should be guided by historic photographic documentation to perpetuate the appearance and character associated with family use. Addressing missing features that relate to family history and stories, such as the vine-covered wisteria pergola and grape arbor, requires a thoughtful approach. Rather than replicating these features, developing simple and durable alternatives can provide the space-forming function of the historic structures and support vine growth. The 300-foot-long grape arbor, as shown on the Walter Burleigh Griffin plan, holds potential as an organizing element for the fields and a renewed feature of the property that can also serve as a pedestrian route to and from the core area, enhancing accessibility and connectivity. Given the extension of the north fields toward the neighboring contemporary house lots, the planting of an evergreen or mixed evergreen and deciduous screen to the north can aid in shielding intrusive views.

Conspicuous lighting within the landscape may conflict with the desired feeling of a family home. Full cut-off lights, designed to comply with dark sky guidelines, can be mounted on buildings or poles. Options include clean and contemporary design styles that will be recessive in the broader landscape. Commercial-grade solar lights may be an effective approach.

To enhance visitor learning and programs, storytelling opportunities embedded in the landscape relate to its long evolution, including pre-contact Indigenous uses of this area along the Connecticut coast, to the historic Mather family period spanning from 1778 to 2017. These collective stories, chronicling generations within a living family, can be nested within the landscape. The self-sufficient post-Revolutionary War generations, grounded in land productivity, provide a rich tapestry of stories. From hayfields supporting cows and horses to flax cultivation for linen cloth, and from vegetable gardens to a long grape arbor, each element offers a window into family history. Early modes of travel could be presented with images of historic cars on the property. The career of architect Bertha Mather McPherson provides a basis for an inspiring narrative about a pioneering woman professional. Nature, science and habitat stories can also be featured, including topics such as edible ferns, the life cycle of insects (perhaps with a focus on butterflies with host plants in the landscape), bird habitats for nesting and migration, and wetland ecology. Five potential eras for storytelling are listed below.

- Indigenous lifeways in upland coastal Connecticut
- Colonial era and the Mather family during the Revolutionary War
- Self-sustaining life on the Homestead and agricultural history of Darien
- Stephen Tyng Mather's era, his founding role in the National Park Service, and his time at the Mather Homestead
- Bertha Mather McPherson's era, her career as a pioneering woman architect, and her life at the Homestead

The existing Playhouse and the missing greenhouse offer opportunities for future programming venues. As the Playhouse dates to the 1930s, designed by Bertha Mather McPherson, it could host a century-old outdoor play experience. A new greenhouse, if it is a desirable asset, could be located in the same location as the former structure. The small building could be accompanied by an outdoor paved space, possibly with overhead seasonal shade, serving as an outdoor classroom. If the greenhouse itself is not desired, the footprint of the historic structure and the area to the north may still be designed as an outdoor classroom.

Storytelling can launch from a well-considered series of waysides featuring a range of stories. These waysides, with text and graphics, would potentially be augmented with lesson plans, guided tours, and/or a website providing in-depth information on each topic. For a more detailed learning experience and access to a website, installing a local Wi-Fi network will support learning and deepen engagement.

As the design advances for each new element or preservation and adjustment of historic features, the integration of maintenance needs and cost considerations is needed. Securing project funding is easier than funds that cover ongoing care and maintenance costs. The nonprofit Mather Homestead Foundation should anticipate these base annual costs to ensure cultural landscape sustainability and preservation into the future.

D. Landscape Preservation Draft Alternatives

For this preliminary draft, Heritage Landscapes has prepared two alternative plans to address preservation as well as program needs and issues for the historic landscape of the Mather Homestead. These two plans offer alternatives for various areas. They are not mutually exclusive and could be combined or blended, or concepts could be eliminated if they do not appeal. The intent is to provide diverse approaches that align to the preservation of remaining historic features and consider aspects of missing spatial organization, interpretation, functions, and programs for a more engaging and diverse visitor experience of this historic site. Options 1 and 2 are included graphically as 11 x 17 hand sketches for reference in reading and studying the explanatory text below.

D1. Option 1 shows the retention of the core area around the Main House, with the replanting of a lost tree near the drive entry from Brookside Road. Possible entry gates are noted at both arrival points from Brookside and Stephen Mather Roads to allow for closure of the property and to focus entry and exit traffic as desired. To reintroduce missing space-shaping elements, the pergola extending east from the Little House is shown. To improve access, an angled path leads from the north side of the Education Center to the interior drive near the Main House.

A terrace on the north side of the Education Center provides activity space for social gatherings and workshops. The replanting of the double row of evergreens extending north from the Education Center serves the purpose of screening the parking lot and provides an interior space between the rows that could be paved with stone dust or decomposed granite to support foot traffic and function well for a variety of uses. A narrow garden border below the evergreens may feature ferns, wildflowers, and spring bulbs. To the east, the former greenhouse structure is replaced with a contemporary one and a paved terrace to the north provides a space for horticultural programs and workshops.

The parking lot extension accommodates 30 cars to the west. In Option 1, the new lot is shown as extending approximately 20 feet into the wetland setback. The proposed detailing would be to pave the 20-foot aisle, while the parking spaces would be pervious, infiltrating surface runoff to minimize stormwater management. An effective method for pervious paving is to build a base of compacted gravel, 2-inch crushed stone, cleaned of stone fines. Over that base, a thin layer of topsoil (1-2 inches) and then turf grass seed to provide a predominantly green surface.

A small orchard block is depicted around the playhouse, replacing the apple trees seen in historic views. These new orchard plantings could be fruit trees if desired. Seasonal fruit harvest provides an opportunity to partner with a local fruit grower on harvest events or hold demonstrations of fruit drying, canning, and other homesteading activities.

At the north edge of the evergreen rows, a vehicular route, composed of stabilized gravel with turf cover, reaches the lawn parking available for large events. A question arises as to the timing of these large events. Is there a potential for rain, soggy ground, snow, ice, or other conditions that make lawn parking unfeasible? If so, the field parking areas may include a gravel base. In Option 1, the parking is organized to both sides of a long arbor, potentially planted with grapes. This arbor location is aligned to the arbor shown on the 1909 Walter Burley Griffin plan. The arbor would serve as the pedestrian route with a firm accessible surface to access the core area of the Main House and Education Center. A deciduous native tree row lines the frontage along Brookside Road, renewing the historic tree-lined property edge.

D2. Option 2 preserves the core area with a few small additions and minor adjustments for access. The sketch shows the replacement of the recently removed Japanese pagoda tree next to the tennis lawn. For gathering space, the footprint of the 1906 barn can be reconfigured as a terrace, with a retaining wall on the south side to hold the grade. An access route to reach the Little House and Main House could be graded into the landscape on the north and east sides of the terrace. In this option, a wide pavement to the north of the Education Center is flanked by gardens. These plantings could support programming with a theme of colonial-era plants such as Dyer's woad, Poet's daffodil, antique rambling rose, and more.

The parking lot shown in Option 2 is shifted to align with the entry drive, flanked by double nose-in spaces. The recommended pavement would be pervious asphalt or concrete that will infiltrate stormwater. The soil type and infiltration rate below that paving construction requires testing in advance to ensure percolation.

The double row of evergreen trees is shown as an important spatial organizing feature. The area between the rows could simply be surfaced with turf grass or may offer other opportunities: a butterfly and bee habitat planting with a bisecting trail; or a vegetable garden along the eastern outer edge as documented historically.

The access route to field parking extends from the new paved parking lot, turning east to reach the field. A 100-car maximum capacity can be accommodated easily. Parking is aligned to the stone walls and a new circumference trail links this area to the entire Homestead property. The trail system enlarges opportunities for visitor movements and exploration of the entire property and the adjacent conservation lands. These trails could connect with the existing trail system in the Mather Meadows

parcels to the south side of Stephen Mather Road. The creation of these trails and any connection with the existing trails would need to be agreed upon with the Darien Land Trust.

At the site of the former greenhouse, a paved terrace, benches, worktables and perhaps a shade structure could provide space for horticultural programs. At the playhouse, the setting can be augmented by flowering trees, rather than fruit trees, to frame the small building, with perhaps five trees in total. Playhouse programming would be hosted on the lawn to the south, where some workshops and events are currently held.

On the conservation lands north of the Playhouse, a wildflower meadow, a milkweed colony, or native grasses could be established. If grasses are chosen, a maze could be cut for an engaging exploration event late in the growing season (Figure 5.1).

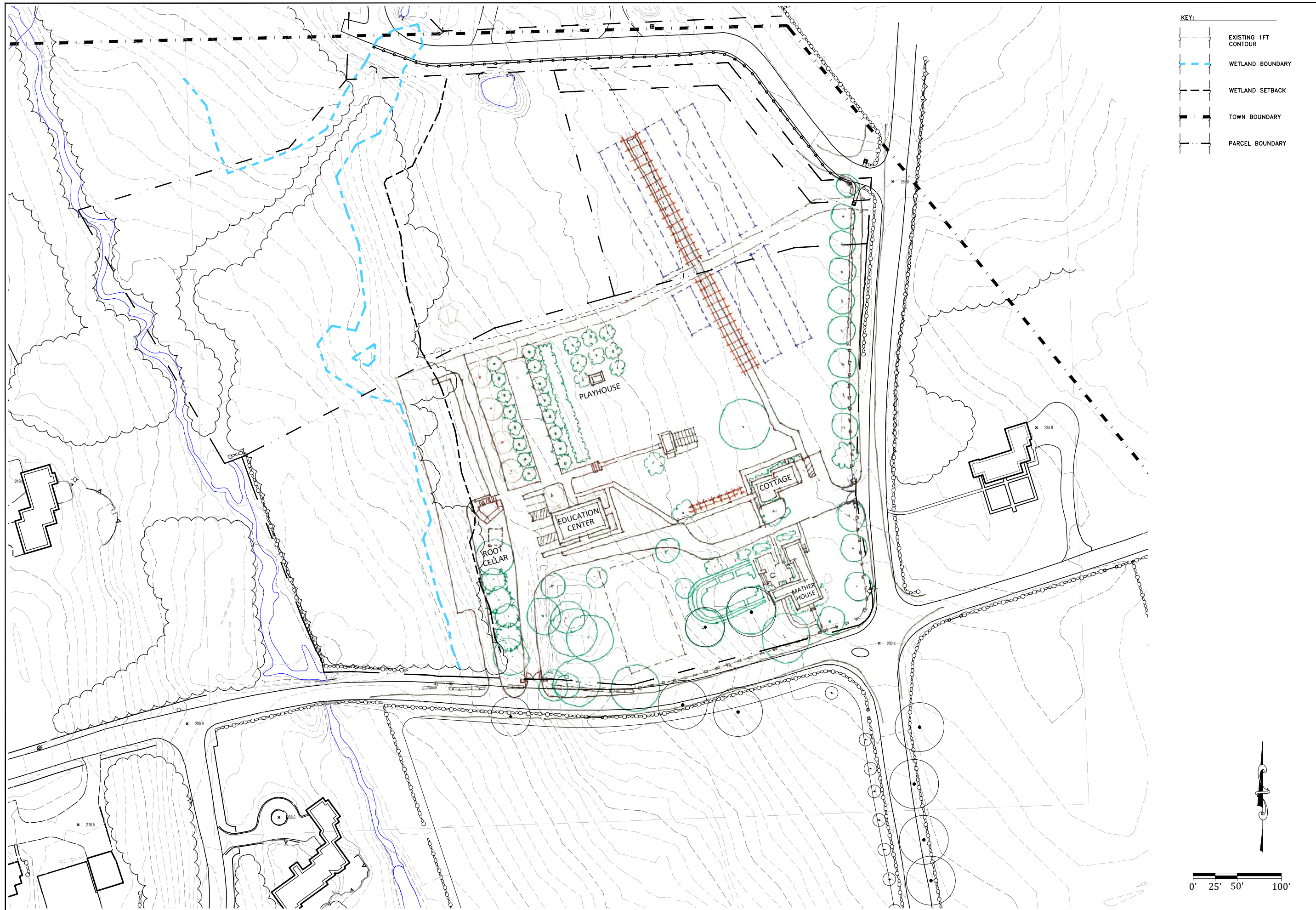


Figure 5.1 This image shows an example of native grasses with a mown path. A field of native grasses could be developed as insect and bird habitat. A simple path or varied paths cut for exploration would invite visitors. HL 2024.

Chapter 5 Endnotes

¹ Mather Homestead, National Register nomination, 8 Significance, paragraph 1, 1967.

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KEY:

	EXISTING 1FT CONTOUR
	WETLAND BOUNDARY
	WETLAND SETBACK
	TOWN BOUNDARY
	PARCEL BOUNDARY



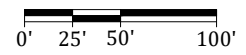
MATHER HOMESTEAD CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

Darien, Connecticut

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Mather Homestead
19 Stephen Mather Road, Darien Connecticut 06820

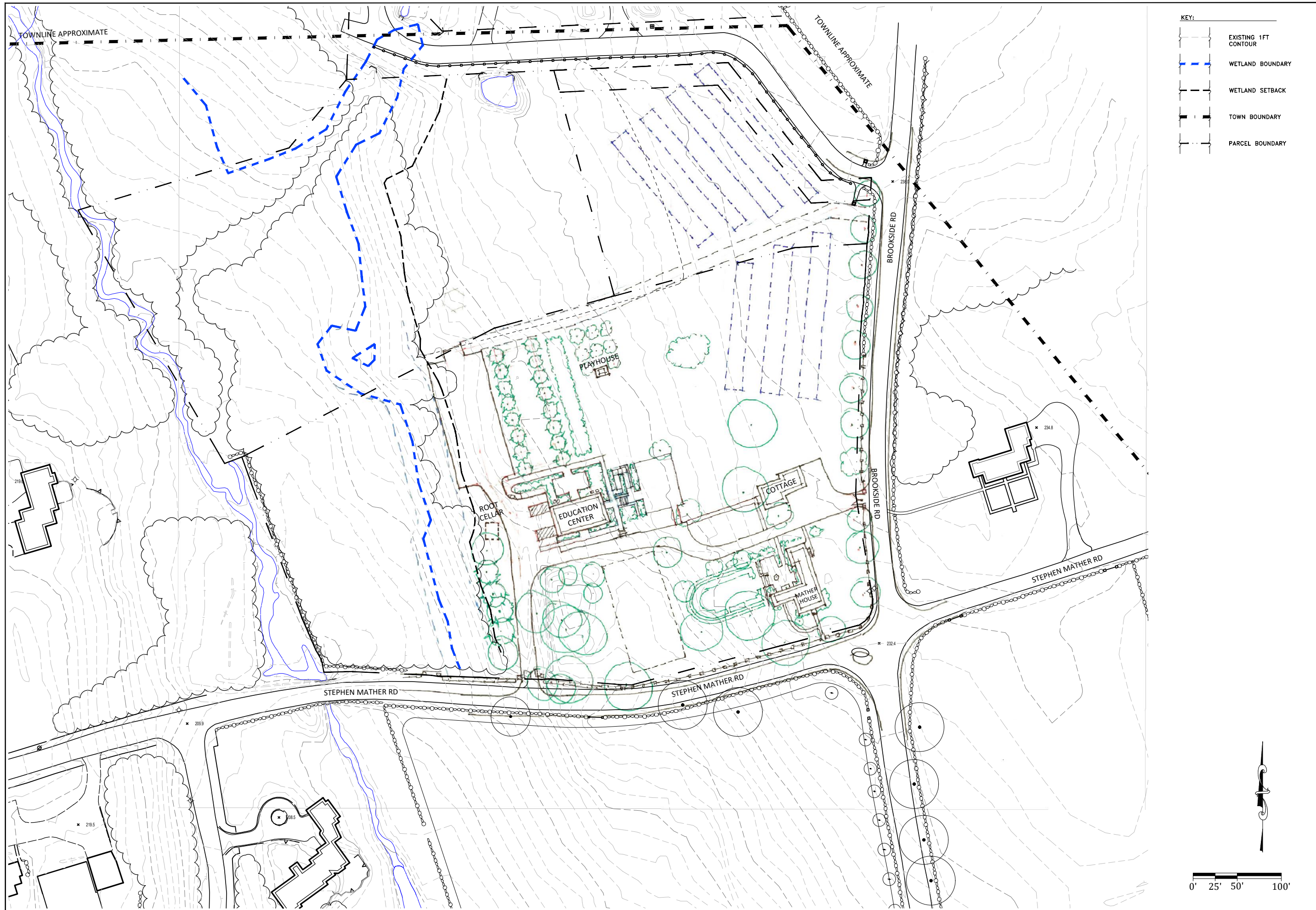
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**L11 Landscape
Rehabilitation
Plan Option A**

Date:
January 2024



KEY:

	EXISTING 1FT CONTOUR
	WETLAND BOUNDARY
	WETLAND SETBACK
	TOWN BOUNDARY
	PARCEL BOUNDARY



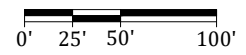
MATHER HOMESTEAD CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

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January 2024

