

Hamilton Grange National Memorial Restoration Update – November 5, 2008

Public Input Sought on the Use of Convent Avenue Site

The National Park Service (NPS) develops a General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS) that serves as a projected long-term framework for the management and use of an NPS site. The GMP/EIS for Hamilton Grange was published in 1995. The final plan called for the relocation of the Grange from Convent Avenue to St. Nicholas Park and for NPS to “restore the Grange, to the greatest degree possible, to its appearance during Hamilton’s residency (1802-04).” This past June, NPS moved the Grange and is in the process of restoring the home so visitors can fully appreciate the historical context and significance of Hamilton’s home.

The Hamilton Grange GMP/EIS also specified action for the redevelopment of the Convent Avenue property once the home was moved. The plan called for turning the existing site into a new structure for public and NPS uses. However, this provision of the 1995 GMP/EIS is no longer feasible and will be amended.

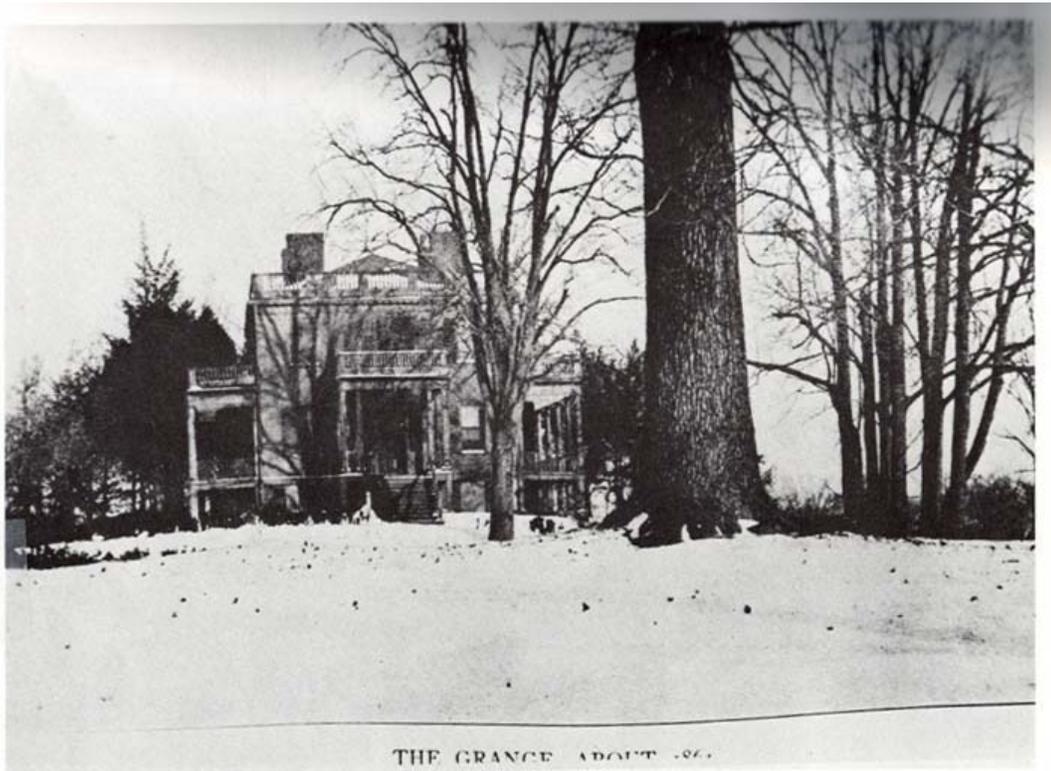
Amending the GMP/EIS will involve consultation with the public, both to generate ideas and to comment on alternatives. NPS will ask the public to help identify feasible alternatives for the Convent Avenue site. By the end of this year we hope to begin the public scoping process, and will communicate via a variety of media on opportunities for the public to comment.

***Original 1802 Roof Balustrade**

In the 1980 Historic Structure Report for the Grange, the principal investigators surmised that the balustrade (decorative railing) shown in the earliest photograph, ca 1860 (see below), was not the original location of the balustrade. Their assumption that the balustrade had been relocated was primarily based on the alterations that had been made to all of the roofs prior to 1860 to increase the roof pitch to reduce water infiltration.

To try and resolve the question of the original balustrade the NPS restoration project team has conducted extensive investigations of the remaining original flush boards (at the front facade, piazzas) and clapboards (rear facade), which included analysis of the paint layers (approximately 22 layers) and removal of later date clapboards and flush boards to expose the original porch and piazza roof fastening and flashing details. We located the attachment point of the balustrade at the north facade over the former rear entryway. Paint analysis within the field of the balustrade newel and rail attachment locations and the surrounding clapboards revealed that the balustrade was attached here when the Grange was originally constructed, as shown in the earliest photograph.

We have concluded that the 1860 photograph does represent the original balustrade. This balustrade was removed, documented and discarded around 1937. The documentation of the balustrades appearance is sufficient to allow restoration of the balustrade to the main roof, porches and piazzas. The project team will continue its investigations to verify the attachment method of the balustrade to the main roof.



***New Roof Being Laid**

The lower sloped roof will be clad with western red cedar shingles, 16" long, widths from 3" to 6". The shingles will be individually hand dipped with a full bodied stain, dried before laying with zinced roofing nails, with 4" exposure. The wood shingle roof paint color is derived from the original wood shingles found in the false chimneys.

The upper roof will be clad with a protective membrane and the false chimneys will be clad with tongue and grove flush board siding and painted to match the original finish. The project team will remove the later layers of paint from the original chimney cladding to expose the painting scheme for the original chimney for replication on the new protective cladding.

*See September 10 and October 8, 2008 updates at www.nps.gov/hagr for additional roof details.

To comment or ask a question, please return to the Hamilton Grange Web site and click on the e-mail link above the updates. To be removed from this update list, go to www.nps.gov/hagr, click on "e-mail us" and write UNSUBCRIBE in the subject line before submitting. Thank you.