

PUBLIC MEETING POSTPONED REGARDING PROPOSED REHABILITATION OF DAVID WALKER FARMSTEAD AS A PRE-SCHOOL

Date

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Contact

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At Valley Forge National Historical Park the National Park Service (NPS) will lease the David Walker Farmstead for proposed rehabilitation as a pre-school facility by the Montessori Children's House of Valley Forge. The NPS has begun preparation of an Environmental Assessment and Assessment of Effect (EA/AOE) to assess alternatives and impacts for the proposed rehabilitation of both historic and non-historic structures for this purpose. The first step in public involvement on the proposal was public comment on any initial issues or concerns they may have related to the proposed rehabilitation. These issues or concerns will be addressed during the planning process and in the draft EA/DOE. The public comment period extended for 30 days and closed on April 28, 2006.

The planning schedule originally targeted late May for publication of draft plans for public review and mid June for a public meeting. In order to completely respond to the public comments received in April, as well as to fully assess the environmental impacts of the proposals, NPS will take additional time in further developing the proposals. Therefore, the public meeting is postponed.

When a new date is set, each person who previously received a notification letter, or who contacted the park with comments, will receive a new letter with updated information. If you did not receive a letter but would like to be added to the mailing list, please contact NPS at one of the addresses listed below under "For More Information."

BACKGROUND

The David Walker Farmstead is located at 1630 Thomas Road, at the corner of Richards Road, in Tredyffrin Township, and was sometimes known as "Ivy Hollow." The property was acquired by the NPS shortly after the national historical park was established, but was retained by the previous owner on a 25-year use and occupancy permit. The NPS took possession of the property in 2004. The NPS has determined that there is no feasible park operational or visitor services use for the structures on the property, which are vacant and in poor condition. Additionally, no federal funds are available for their preservation or maintenance. The park's general management plan targets the property for adaptive reuse. Using the authority granted by 36CFR Part 18, Section 18.1, the property was made available for leasing to a tenant that could rehabilitate it according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation and that could maintain it.

The adjacent modern house and garage at 1610 Thomas Road have been used as quarters for park staff. Nationwide, the NPS is reducing the number of staff housing units to only those that are essential for operations, however, and this unit is not essential. The NPS has determined that there is no feasible park operational or visitor services use for the structures. Therefore, the structures were made available for leasing or demolition.

PROPOSED PROJECT

Work proposed includes:

renovation of and an addition to the barn, which will be used as the school; renovation of the interior of the tenant house, to be used as the school library and a meeting room; demolition of an adjacent modern residence and garage and addition of a parking lot to the demolition site; new plantings to screen the parking lot from Thomas Road; and rehabilitation at some time in the future of the David Walker House, for a use yet to be determined.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The EA/AOE will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality, the NPS Management Policies (2001), the NPS Director's Order 12: Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-Making, the NPS Director's Order 28: Cultural Resource Management, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. This assessment will evaluate the potential environmental impacts on natural resources, cultural resources, visitor use and experience, and socio-economic resources. Mitigation measures will be identified to avoid or reduce any adverse impacts from this project. An EA/AOE—which will include details about alternatives and impacts for the project—will be available for public review in summer 2006. A public meeting will be scheduled at which the project alternatives will be presented and discussed. The public may make comments at the meeting or in writing during a 30-day public review period.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please call (610) 783-1047 weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or write to the Superintendent, Valley Forge National Historical Park, Attention: David Walker Farmstead Rehabilitation, 1400 North Outer Line Drive, King of Prussia, PA 19406; or e-mail the park Superintendent at VAFO_Superintendent@nps.gov.