

Project Agreement

INTRODUCTION

A project agreement for a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) establishes consensus from two or more individuals, offices, or organizations for project work to be completed. The term, project agreement, is used in this text to define the specific issues, tasks, management objectives, and anticipated products involved in a CLR project.

Note that for work involving individuals or offices within the National Park Service (NPS), the term “task directive” describes a project agreement. For contracts outside the NPS, a project agreement is often called a “scope of work.”

CONTENT OF A PROJECT AGREEMENT

A CLR project agreement is developed to meet management objectives and answer specific management questions. The project agreement addresses Part I of a CLR, titled “Site History, Existing Conditions, and Analysis and Evaluation,” and Part 2, “Treatment.” The project agreement may outline the scope of Part I, Part 2, or both parts. (See Figure 1.)

The scope of a project agreement is based on the management objectives, which may require information on site history, existing conditions, and the analysis and evaluation of a landscape (excluding treatment). If park management has adequate information from former research, management objectives for a CLR may be concerned only with treatment. This information is reflected in the project agreement.

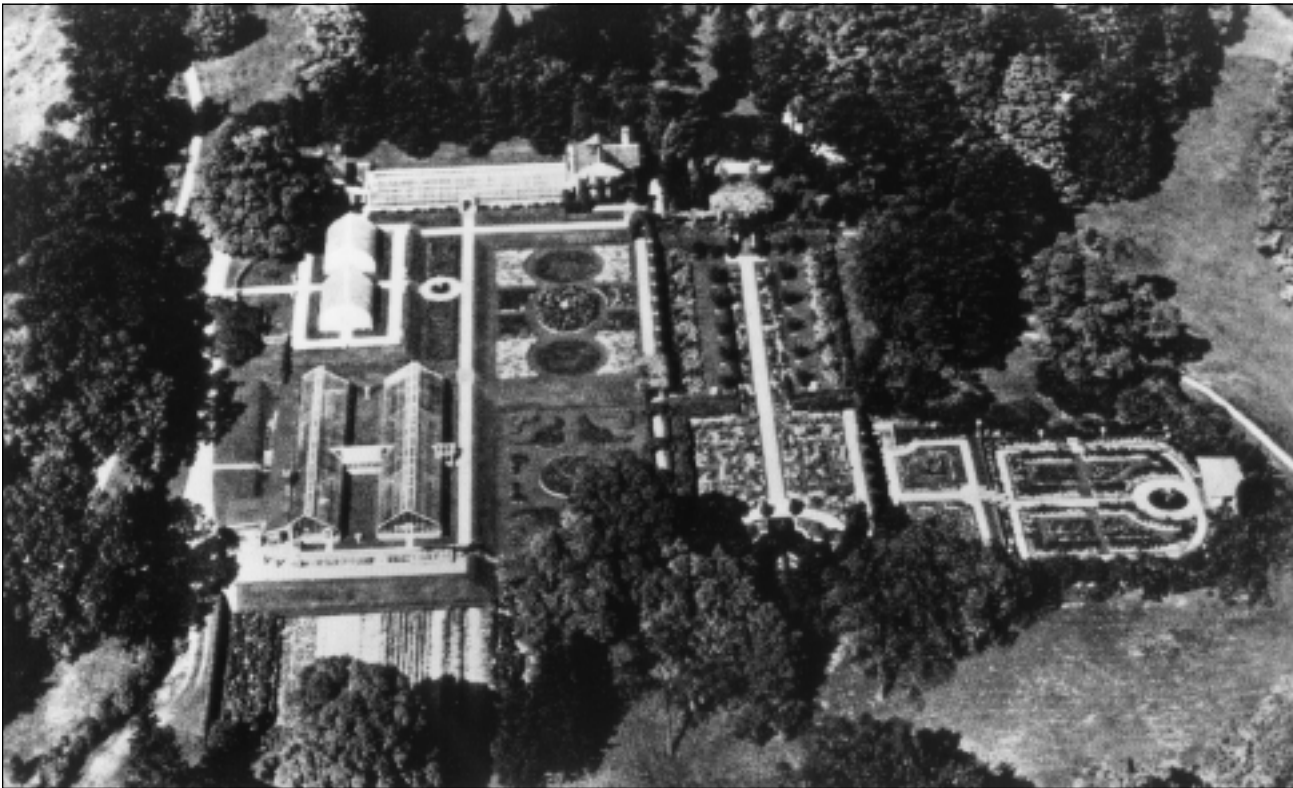


Figure 1. The project agreement for Volume 1 of the CLR for Vanderbilt Mansion involved the preparation of only Part I, titled “Site History, Existing Conditions, and Analysis and Evaluation.” Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site. (NPS, c. 1930s)

Regardless of whether a CLR project agreement addresses Part 1, Part 2, or both, all project agreements for a CLR should include the following:

- description of the study site, site boundaries, and site context
- description of the project's purpose and its relationship to management objectives
- description of the project scope, including level of investigation
- list and description of the tasks to be completed
- list identifying the office and staff responsibilities
- list and description of the interim and end products or deliverables
- schedule for completing individual tasks, products, and payments
- statement of the project budget

A project agreement also identifies constraints and special considerations, compliance requirements, information and data gathering needs, and coordination requirements, including the desired period for public comment if appropriate.

PREPARATION OF A PROJECT AGREEMENT

A project agreement is the first step in clarifying management objectives and specific tasks for a CLR. Preparing an agreement involves conducting

preliminary research and compiling background information about the cultural landscape. This task may require a team of individuals with different backgrounds and expertise. A historical landscape architect usually leads the project team. The historical landscape architect receives support from park staff and other professionals in allied disciplines, such as history, historic architecture, natural resources, archeology, cultural anthropology, interpretation, and park maintenance.

The time required to prepare a project agreement varies from project to project. In some cases, a short site visit allows enough time to review park files, meet with park staff, and conduct preliminary site reconnaissance. Preparing a project agreement requires more time when the site is large and specific issues are complex, or the site has a national level of significance with numerous interest groups involved.

Preparing a CLR project agreement involves three primary steps: 1) project initiation, 2) preliminary research, and 3) site visit. These steps are described in the following sections.

Project Initiation

To develop a CLR project agreement, park and technical staff meet to define the purpose, management objectives, and key issues to be addressed. Management's information needs and specific questions should be addressed. Information about the availability of historical materials, planning documents, base maps, and specific site data in park collections is collected during the meeting. Other pertinent repositories, contacts,

and public interest groups are also noted, along with information about current maintenance practices and park operations. Maintenance information may influence project logistics, such as scheduling, site access, and field inventory.

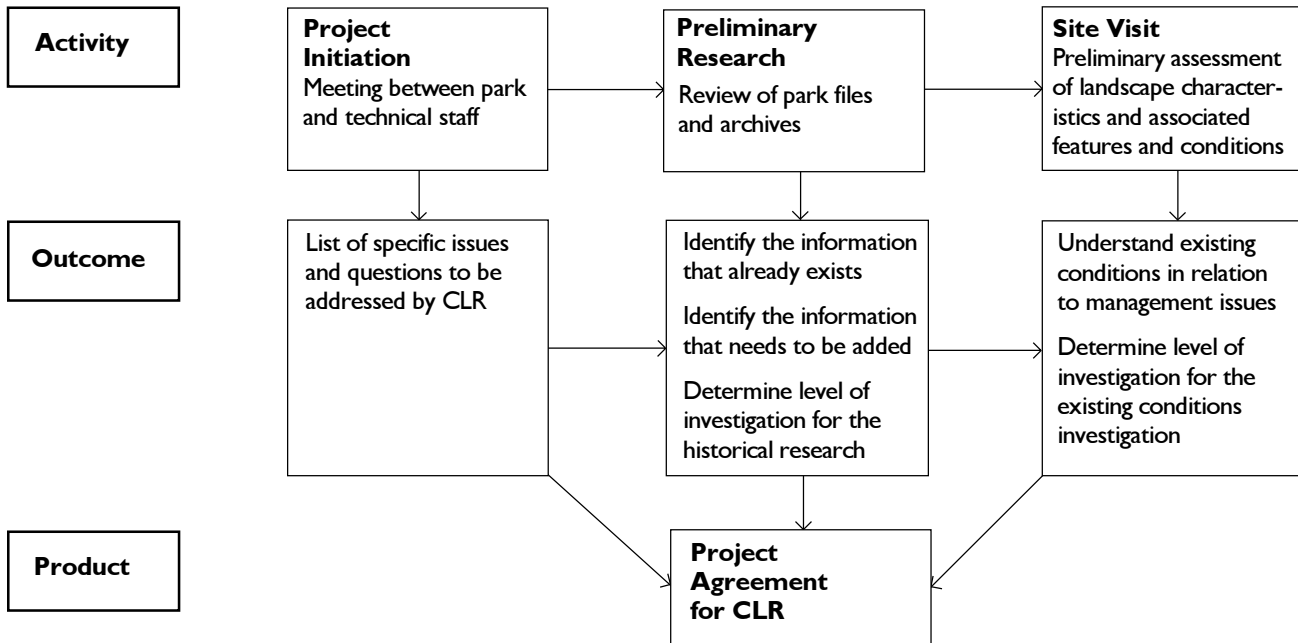
Preliminary Research

The second step in developing a project agreement involves a preliminary review of historical materials related to the site. Extensive information may be found in park files and in a variety of cultural and natural resources databases, such as the Cultural Landscapes Inventory, the List of Classified Structures, the Cultural Sites Inventory, natural resource inventories, and geographical information system databases. When reviewing historic materials, it is necessary to determine whether additional research is required to fully address the management objectives for the project. This step is critical for providing fundamental background information and clarifying what is known about the landscape and what additional information is needed. It is important to recognize that this research is quantitative but not extensive; research is conducted to identify and evaluate the adequacy of primary and secondary sources and collections, and to gather preliminary site information, ensuring the project agreement's accuracy and completeness.

Site Visit

The final step in preparing a project agreement is a site visit. The site visit provides a preliminary assessment of the landscape characteristics

PROCESS FOR PREPARING A PROJECT AGREEMENT



and associated features, as well as the physical condition of the landscape. The site visit may take the form of a windshield survey or walk-through. It is preferable to be accompanied by someone who is knowledgeable about the site and the salient issues to be addressed in the CLR. The purpose of the visit is to understand management issues and existing conditions so that the project agreement can accurately reflect the required level of effort.

SUMMARY

Although a project agreement directs and organizes the scope and content of a CLR, the agreement is not a static document. Because the research to prepare an agreement is preliminary, it is not uncommon that additional information or material

becomes available during the course of a project, influencing or altering the original assumptions. In this case, it may be appropriate for park and technical staff to amend the original project agreement to respond to the new information. (See *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Appendices*, "Appendix J: Project Agreements.")

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